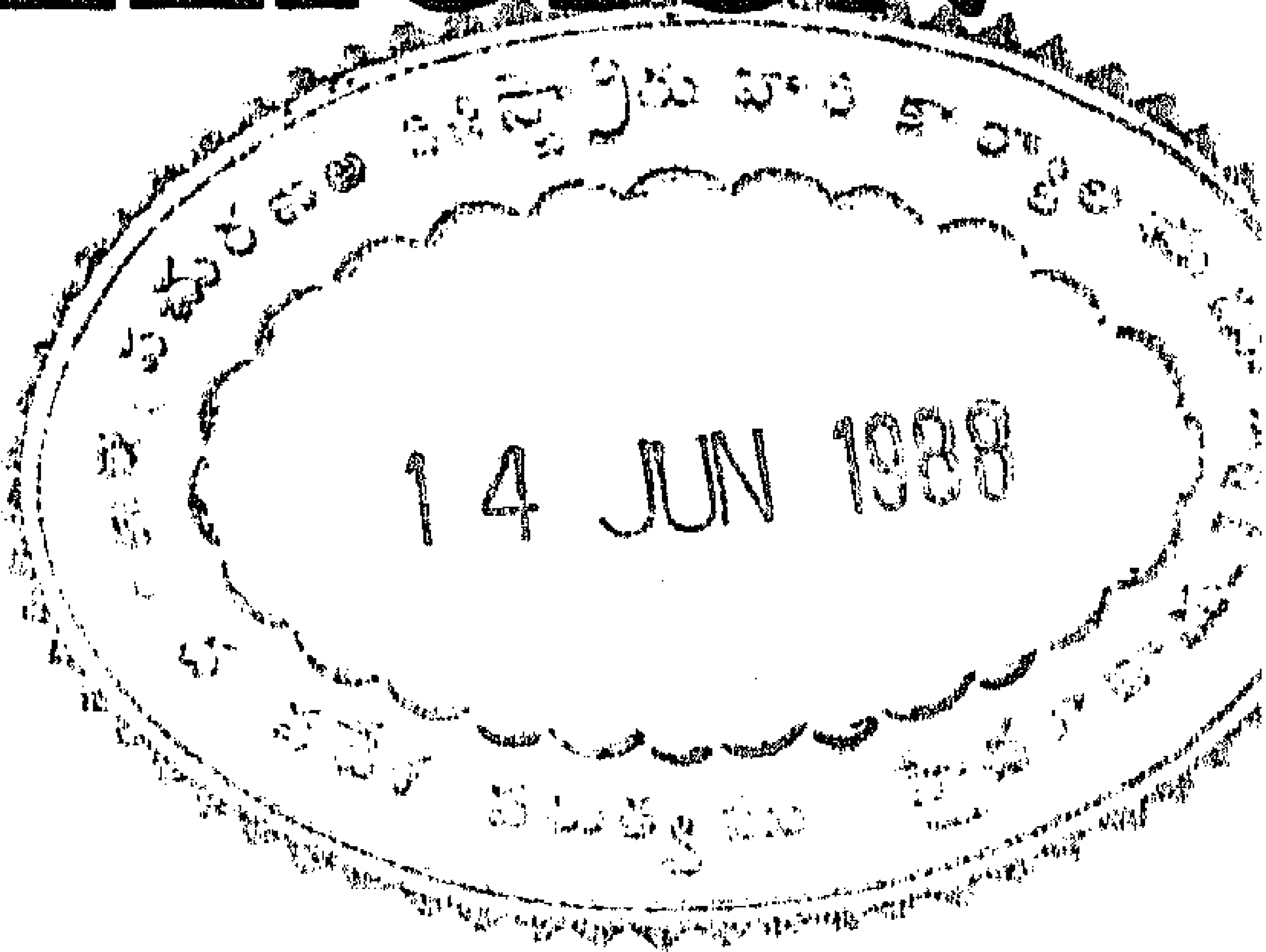
A HAND-BOOK OF
HINDU RELIGION





TIRUMALA-TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS
TIRUPATI
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PREFACE

The Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanams Committee, intending to publish a Handbook of Hindu Religion for the benefit of the public and the students of the Summer School of Hindu Religion, appointed a Committee to take steps for the preparation of the book. The Committee approved the synopsis of the book prepared by the Director of the Oriental Institute and appointed a sub-committee consisting of Profs. P. N. Srinivasachari, P. V. Ramanujasvami and K. C. Varadachari to draft the Handbook. The present book is the result of the combined labours of the three scholars named above. The Committee will consider its effort amply rewarded if the Handbook serves to inculcate the main tenets of our religion upon the minds of the readers.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It is indeed a great pleasure for the T. T. Devasthanams to resume the publication and dissemination of religious literature after a period of long silence. As all of us know, our Vedic literature coupled with ritualistic and conventional procedures has been our back-bone and part of our national life from times immemorial. But, of late, this type of revered approach towards our religious treasures, has been disappearing slowly, giving way to many fissiparous and antinational tendencies, due to various reasons and influences obviously known to us.

In these days of rocket speed degradation of national character any attempt which helps to make the people think about our religions would be the most appreciable factor in the path of religious uplift. Having this in mind the T. T. Devasthanams has again taken up the printing of books on our religion and perhaps this second edition of 'Hand Book of Hindu Religion' is the beginning on that path.

With regards to the contents, nothing has been added by us, as the first edition itself was planned and carried out in such a way and style easily understandable to the moderately educated devotee. This book is concised but complete by itself in dealing with all aspects of Hindu Religion in a birds eye view.

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam would feel much elated, if this booklet is patronised by all the Asthikas of the Country.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER,

T. T. D., TIRUPATI.

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः

प्रार्थनाश्लोकाः

★ ★ ★

अखिलभुवनजन्मस्थेमभङ्गादिलीले
विनतविविधभूतव्रातरक्षैकदीक्षे ।
श्रुतिशिरसि विदीप्ते ब्रह्मणि श्रीनिवासे
भवतु मम परस्मिन् शेमुषी भक्तिरूपा ॥

श्रीभाष्यम्—श्रीभगवद्रामानुजाचार्याः

समस्तजननीं वन्दे चैतन्यस्तन्यदायिनीम् ।
श्रेयसीं श्रीनिवासस्य करुणामिव रूपिणीम् ॥

दयाशतकम्—श्रीमद्वेदान्तदेशिकाः

ईशानां जगतोऽस्य वेंकटपतेः विष्णोः परां प्रेयसीं
तद्वक्षस्स्थलनित्यवासरसिकां तत्क्षान्तिसंवर्धिनीम् ।
पद्मालङ्कृतपाणिपल्लवयुगां पद्मासनस्थां श्रियं
वात्सल्यादिगुणोज्ज्वलां भगवतीं वन्दे जगन्मातरम् ॥

श्रीस्तुतिः—श्रीमद्वेदान्तदेशिकाः

श्रीभूमिनायक दयादिगुणामृताब्धे
देवाधिदेव जगदेकशरण्यमूर्ते ।
श्रीमन्ननन्तगरुडादिभिरर्चिताङ्घ्रे
श्रीवेंकटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥

श्रीवेङ्कटेशसुप्रभातम्—श्रीवादिभीकरमहागुरुः

अधिवेंकटशैलमुदारमतेः
जनताभिमताधिकदानरतात्
परदेवतया गदितान्निगमैः
कमलादयितान्न परं कलये ॥

श्रीवेङ्कटेशस्तोत्रम्–श्रीवादिभीकरमहागुरुः

पार्थाय तत्सदृशसारथिना त्वयैव
यौ दर्शितौ स्वचरणौ शरणं व्रजेति ।
भूयोऽपि मह्यमिह तौ करदर्शितौ ते
श्रीवेंकटेशचरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

श्रीवेङ्कटेशप्रपत्तिः–श्रीवादिभीकरमहागुरुः

विना वेंकटेशं न नाथो न नाथः
सदा वेंकटेशं स्मरामि स्मरामि ।
हरे वेंकटेश प्रसीद प्रसीद
प्रियं वेंकटेश प्रयच्छ प्रयच्छ ॥

श्रीवेङ्कटेशस्तोत्रम्–श्रीवादिभीकरमहागुरुः

सर्वावयवसौन्दर्यसंपदा सर्वचेतसाम् ।
सदा संमोहनायास्तु वेंकटेशाय मङ्गलम् ॥

श्रीवेङ्कटेशमङ्गलाशासनम्–श्रीवादिभीकरमहागुरुः

శ్రీమతే రామానుజాయనమః

ప్రార్థన పద్యములు

ఉ॥ శ్రీవసుధాకళత్ర! యతసీసుమనోతిమనోజ్ఞగాత్ర! మా
యావిహిత త్రిలోక! నిగమార్థవివేకవిపాక! భవ్యసం
సేవకసౌమ్యమానసవశీకృతరూప! భవాంధకార ని
ర్ధావనదీప! దీప్తనవతామరసేక్షణ! విశ్వరక్షణా!

నృసింహపురాణము—ఎఱ్ఱాప్రెగ్గడ.

శా॥ విన్నంజాలు భవన్మహత్త్వము, భవద్విజ్ఞాన సద్గోష్ఠిలో
నున్నంజాలు, భవత్పదాంబురుహసేవోత్సాహసంపన్నులం
గన్నంజాలు, భవత్సమంచిత జగత్కల్యాణ నామంబుఁ జే
ర్కొన్నంజాలు, నరుండు శాశ్వతశుభారూఢుండు లక్ష్మీశ్వరా!

నృసింహపురాణము—ఎఱ్ఱాప్రెగ్గడ

సీ॥ వినతుల కొసఁగఁ దాల్చిన శాంతరస మన
నడుగులఁ గటకహీరాంశు లమరఁ
గటి నిడ్డ కేల్దమ్మిఁ గడు రాలి క్రమ్మ పు
ప్పొడి వోలెఁ బసిఁడిపచ్చడము దనర
నార్తుల కిదియ దిక్కని తన పాదద్వ
యము చూపుగతి వరహస్త మమరఁ
గడు దయాదృష్టిఁ దెల్పెడు తటిల్లతరీతి
హృదయస్థలిని లక్ష్మి యింపు నెఱప

గీ॥ నాననేందుసుధాధార లనఁగఁ దార
హార వల్లులు నురమున నలరుచుండఁ
జారు మకుటాభిశోభియు శంఖచక్ర
హృద్యపార్శ్వుండు మా వేంకటేశ్వరుండు.

పరమయోగివిలాసము—సిద్ధిరాజు తిమ్మరాజు.

చ॥ ఇతఁ డలమేలుమంగవిభుఁ, డితఁడెపో కలశాబ్ధికన్యకు౯
సతతముఁ జిత్త మిచ్చిన రసజ్ఞుఁడు, ప్రాజ్ఞుఁడు సర్వవైభవో
న్నతుఁడు రమాసతీప్రియుఁడు నందకశార్ఙ్గధరుం డటంచు ని
న్నతివలు మెచ్చి మెచ్చి కొనియాడుదు రెప్పుడు వేంకటేశ్వరా!

శ్రీ వేంకటేశ్వర శతకము—తాళ్ళపాక అన్నమాచార్యులు

ఉ॥ యోగ్యతలేని కష్టుఁడ నయోగ్యుఁడ నన్నిటఁ జూడ గర్భ ని
ర్భాగ్యుఁడ నీకృపామతికిఁ బ్రాప్తుఁడ నోయలమేలుమంగ నీ
చూచుకృపానిరీక్షణమె చూచెదనంచును నీ ప్రియాంగన౯
బూచిన వాక్ప్రసూనములఁ బూజలు చేసెద వేంకటేశ్వరా!

శ్రీ వేంకటేశ్వర శతకము—తాళ్ళపాక అన్నమాచార్యులు.

సీ॥ సర్వేశ! సర్వాత్మ! సర్వగుణాతీత!
సర్వజనావన! సదయహృదయ!
గోపాల! గోపాలగోపనధౌరేయ!
గో గోప గోపికా భాగధేయ!
వారణదైన్యనివారణ! వారణ
శిక్షణదక్షిణ! సింహశౌర్య!
శేషాచలేశ! యశేషలోకనివేశ!
శేషశరీర విశేషతల్ప!

గీ॥ నీలనీరదనీరధినీలగాత్ర!
తీర్థతీర్థమహాతీర్థతీర్థపాద!
నందనందన! సనకసనందన నుత!
శరణు శరణయ్య శరణార్థిశరణ! శరణు.

వెంకటాచల విలాసము.

ఉ॥ ఏమి తపంబొనర్చితిమొ యే సుకృతం బొనరించినామొ యే
నోములు నోచినారమొ మనోరథముల్ మది దేటువారగా
కామితదానపాటవము గల్గిన తండ్రిని వెంకటాచల
స్వామిని చూడగంటిమి శుభమ్ములుగూడ నఘమ్ము లూడగన్.

వెంకటాచల విలాసము.

సీ॥ అతులితోన్నత తిరుపతి పరిపాలన
విభవోన్నతుండవై వెలసికాక
యేరిని నేరుపు నేరంబు లెంచక
నుభయలోక సుఖంబు లొసఁగిగాక
మహిమ యలర్మేలుమంగ యిల్లాలుగా
మును నోఁచు పుణ్యావాసనను గాక
చేఁదోడువాఁదోడునై దయ నెవరు పి
ల్చినతోడ మాటలాడననె గాక

గీ॥ దేవుఁడ నటన్న నూఱక తీఱునెట్లు
చెల్లెఁబో నీకు నొకనికిఁ జెల్లుఁగాక
తండ్రి వీ వలమేల్మంగ తల్లి మాకు
జలజహితధామ వెంకటశైలధామ.

ప్రబంధరాజ విజయ వేంకటేశ్వర విలాసము—గణవరపు వేంకటకవి.

సీ॥ అఖిల విశ్వమున కేకాధార మర్భావ
తారమ్ము తా నౌట తథ్యమగును,
అఖిలమై యాదిమధ్యాంతముల్ లేఁగొన్న
నిత్యంబు తా నౌట సత్యమగును,
అఖిలపూర్ణము సచ్చిదానందమయము నా
రాయణార్ధకము తా నగుట నిజము,
అఖిలజీవుల కాయురారోగ్యభాగ్య ప్ర
దాత తా నౌట యథార్థ మగును,

గీ॥ అఖిల మయి పొల్చు తన కల్మి నరయు నఖిల;
మఖిలము ఖిలమ్మె తనకల్మి నరయకున్న;
నెవ్వఁ డవ్వాఁడ వీవె రావే, భయార్తు
నాదుకోవె! వేంకటనాథ! చేదుకోవె!

శ్రీ వేటూరి ప్రభాకరశాస్త్రి.

క॥ మంగళ మలమేల్మంగకు
మంగళ మలమేలుమంగ మగనికి నని మీ
మంగళ మేమఱ మెద సమ
రాంగణనిస్సీమ! వేంకటాచలధామా!

వేంకటాచలధామతారావళి—ధర్మపురి వెంకటశాస్త్రి.

ஸ்ரீமதே ராமாநுஜாய நம:

ஸ்ரீ வேங்கடேஸ்வர ஸ்தோத்திரங்கள்

காப்பு

பல்லாண்டு பல்லாண்டு பல்லாயிரத் தாண்டு
பலகோடி நூறுயிரம்
மல்லாண்ட திண்தோள் மணிவண்ணு! உன்
சேவடி செவ்வி திருக்காப்பு.

உளன்கண்டாய் நன்னெஞ்சே! உத்தம னென்றும்
உளன்கண்டாய் உள்ளுவா ருள்ளத்து—உளன்கண்டாய்
வெள்ளத்தி னுள்ளானும் வேங்கடத்து மேயானும்
உள்ளத்தி னுள்ளானென்று ஓர்.

—பொய்கையாழ்வார்.

போதறிந்து வானரங்கள் பூஞ்சுனைபுக்கு ஆங்கலர்ந்த
போதரிந்து கொண்டேத்தும் போதுஉள்ளம்!—போது
மணிவேங்கடவன் மலரடிக்கே செல்ல
அணிவேங் கடவன்பே ராய்ந்து.

—பூதத்தாழ்வார்.

தாழ்சடையும் நீள்முடியும் ஒள்மழுவும் சக்கரமும்
சூழரவும் பொன்னுணும் தோன்றுமால்—சூழும்
திரண்டருவி பாயும் திருமலைமே லெந்தைக்கு
இரண்டுருவு மொன்றுய் இசைந்து.

—பேயாழ்வார்.

வேங்கடமே விண்ணோர் தொழுவதுவும் மெய்ம்மையால்
வேங்கடமே மெய்வினைநோய் தீர்ப்பதுவும்—வேங்கடமே
தானவரை வீழத்தன் ஞழிப் படைதொட்டு
வானவரைக் காப்பான் மலை.

—திருமழிசையாழ்வார்.

ஒழிவில்காலமெல்லாம் உடனாய்மன்னி
வழுவிலா அடிமை செய்யவேண்டும்நாம்
தெழிகுரலருவித் திருவேங்கடத்து
எழில்கொள்சோதி எந்தைதந்தை தந்தைக்கே.

அகலகில்லேன் இறையுமென்று அலர்மேல் மங்கையுறை மார்பா!
நிகரில்புகழாய்! உலகம்மூன்றுடையாய்! என்னையாள் வானே!
நிகரி லமரர் முனிக்கணங்கள் விரும்பும் திருவேங் கடத்தானே!
புகலொன் றில்லாஅடியேன்உன்னடிக்கீழ் அமர்ந்துபுகுந்தேனே.

—ஸ்ரீ நம்மாழ்வார்.

சென்னியோங்கு தண்திருவேங்கடமுடையாய்! உலகுகொண்டு
தன்னைவாழநின்றநம்பீ! தாமோதரா! சதிரா!
என்னையும்என்னுடைமையையும் உன்சக்கரப்பொறியொற்றி
நின்னருளே புரிந்திருந்தேன் இனிஎன் திருக்குறிப்பே?

—பெரியாழ்வார்.

ஒளிவண்ணம் வளைசிந்தை உறக்கத்தோடு இவையெல்லாம்
எளிமையால் இட்டு என்னை ஈடழியப் போயினவால்
குளிரருவி வேங்கடத்து என் கோவிந்தன் குணம்பாடி
அளியத்த மேகங்காள்! ஆவிகாத் திருப்பேனே.

—ஸ்ரீ ஆண்டாள்.

செடியாய வல்வினைகள் தீர்க்கும் திருமாலே!
நெடியானே! வேங்கடவா! நின்கோயி லின்வாசல்
அடியாரும் வானவரும் அரம்பையரும் கிடந்தியங்கும்
படியாய்க் கிடந்துஉன் பவளவாய் காண்பேனே.

—*குலசேகராழ்வார்.*

மந்திபாய் வடவேங்கடமாமலை வானவர்கள்
சந்திசெய்யநின்றான் அரங்கத்தரவினணையான்
அந்திபோல் நிறத்தாடையும் அதன்மேலயனைப் படைத்த
உந்திமேலதன்றோ அடியேனுள்ளத்தின்னுயிரே. [தோரெழில்

—*திருப்பாணாழ்வார்.*

குலந்தா னெத்தனையும் பிறந்தேயிறந் தெய்த்தொழிந்தேன்
நலந்தா னொன்றுமிலேன் நல்லதோரறம் செய்துமிலேன்
நிலந்தோய் நீள்முகில்சேர் நெறியார் திருவேங்கடவா!
அலந்தேன் வந்தடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டருளே.

—*திருமங்கையாழ்வார்.*

கண்ணனடி யிணையெமக்குக் காட்டும் வெற்பு
கடுவினைய ரிருவினையும் கடியும் வெற்பு
திண்ணமிது வீடென்னத் திகழும் வெற்பு
தெளிந்தபெருந் தீர்த்தங்கள் செறிந்த வெற்பு
புண்ணியத்தின் புகலிதென்னப் புகழும் வெற்பு
பொன்னுலகில் போகமெல்லாம் புணர்க்கும் வெற்பு
விண்ணவரும் மண்ணவரும் விரும்பும் வெற்பு
வேங்கடவெற் பெனவிளங்கும் வேத வேற்பே.

—*ஸ்ரீமந் நிகமாந்த மஹாதேசிகன்.*

ஆழ்வார் திருவடிகளே சரணம்.

A Hand-Book of Hindu Religion

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION.

Hinduism is one of the most important of living religions in the world; it is the oldest of all and is called *Sanātana Dharma*. No study of religion can be complete without taking its finest and highest forms as revealed in its sacred scriptures and as interpreted by its leading exponents and realised by its seers, sages and saints. Hinduism in a sense supplies the fullest material for the study of religion and can claim to be the one religion which is most comprehensive and universal.

It is not a historical religion, but it is a religion without any historic founders and it has eternal foundation. Historical religions base their doctrines and dogmas on the revelations of their prophets. Hinduism is based on the *Vedas*, the eternal scriptures revealed to the seers and sages and testified to by the *Smṛtis* and transmitted in an unbroken tradition. The *Veda* is the word of God and is God Himself and is therefore eternal or *nitya*. It is *apauruṣeya*, impersonal, not man-

made. Hinduism is *sanātana* religion without beginning and end and is one continuous revelation consisting of the *Veda*, *Vedāngas*, *Smṛtis*, *Itihāsas*, *Purānas*, *Āgamas*, and the hymns of the *Āḷvārs* and the *Nāyanmārs*. It deals with eternal spiritual truths adopted to changing conditions and is therefore fixed in essentials and flexible in non-essentials like rites and rituals.

The term Hinduism is of foreign origin and vague. The term *Sanātana Dharma* is therefore preferable to it and it has a rounded perfection and is comprehensive; but the name Hinduism is sanctioned by usage. *Dharma* applies to righteousness exemplified in practical life, individual and social, and implies also *mokṣa-dharma* or the nature of freedom from the ills of life or *samsāra*. It is thus a way of life and a view of life and includes both theory and practice. The *Veda* is the chief authority or *pramāṇa* for Hinduism, and as aids to its practical understanding are the other scriptures like the *Smṛtis*. There are four *Vedas*, the *Ṛg-veda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. Each *Veda* has three divisions, namely the *Mantra*, the *Brāhmaṇa* and the *Upaniṣad*. One who knows the inner meaning of the *Mantras* and the *Brāhmaṇas* is a *Mantra-dṛk*, who acquires mastery over nature, internal and external. It is wrong to say that the *Vedas* belong to the child stage of humanity. An

ancient Vedic text which says that the *Sat* or God is one and the seers call it variously contains the keynote of Hinduism and its universality. The *Upaniṣads* or the Vedānta are the most sublime teachings of Hinduism and are called *Brahma vidyā*, containing the wisdom of Brahman, by knowing which everything is known. They are the solace of life and death. Vedic knowledge is summed up in the Vedāntic wisdom of Brahman enshrined in the *Praṇava* or *Aum*. Though the *Vedas* refer to the economical and ethical (the hedonistic) ends of life, the highest end is *mokṣa* or the realisation of Brahman. It is therefore called *Brahmavidyā*. The *Veda* cannot be known without aids or *aṅgas* and there are six aids like phonetics, grammar and astronomy.

The *Smṛtis* like those of Manu bring out the ethics of the Hindus in their individual and social aspects. They deal more with duties and virtues than with rights or privileges. There are cardinal virtues like truth and *ahiṁsā* which are universally applicable and also relative duties or *yuga-dharmas* which exist only in certain periods. The *Smṛti* of sage Parāśara is meant for this age of Kali. The two *Itihāsas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* describe the two *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. God incarnates into history at critical periods to restore righteousness and punish wickedness. Even such punish-

ment is ultimately only for the reformation of the wicked man. There are eighteen *Purāṇas* of which the chief are the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata.* They are chiefly cosmic accounts dealing with the origin, the preservation and the destruction of the Universe. Their chief aim is to bring out the increasing purpose of God as *rakṣaka* or the maker of *muktas.* The Āgamas explain the way in which God comes down to the world of man in the form of *arcā* or idol in order to redeem him from his sinfulness. The hymns of the Nāyanmārs and the Āḻvārs are mainly sung in praise of *arcā* or idol in the temple for the bestowal of His redemptive grace.

The study of the *Vedas*, the *Smṛtis*, the *Itihāsas*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Āgamas* and the experiences of the Āḻvārs and the Nāyanmārs reveal the inner truth of religion, *viz.*, the gradual descent of God to the human level to lift him up to the Divine level. The *Brahman* of the *Vedas* becomes the *antaryāmin* of the Vedānta, the *Īśvara* of the *Smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas*, the *Avatāra* of the *Itihāsas* and the *arcā* of the *Āgamas*, Āḻvars and Nāyanmārs. With God's grace man ascends from the animal and human stages through the spiritual stages to the divine stage of *mukti.* Thus all the scriptures have a unity of spiritual purpose suited to different types and persons.

Hinduism as Vedānta expounds this unity of import in a philosophic way. The six *Darśanas* or systems of philosophy were composed by different *ṛṣis* with one single aim, namely, the removal of the ills of life to the attainment of *mokṣa*. *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* deals with the logic or *pramāṇas* and their categories of life. The *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* deals with *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* and the way in which the *puruṣa* frees himself from *prakṛti*. *Pūrva-mīmāṁsā* stresses the ethics of *dharma*. *Uttara-mīmāṁsā* of the Vedānta is the supreme philosophy of Brahman by knowing whom everything is known.

Each of these systems helps the *mumukṣu* or the seeker after Brahman to attain *viveka*, *vairāgya* and ethical purity respectively as essential steps to the attainment of Brahman.

The *pramāṇas* prove that Brahman is the highest object of knowledge. They affirm the reality of the supreme *puruṣa*. The highest *dharma* consists in attaining Him. This is the way of Vedānta as taught in the *Upaniṣads*, the *Gītā* and the *Brahmasūtras* which are called the three *prasthānas*. The *Upaniṣads* describe the direct experience of God by the *Ṛṣis*; the *Gītā* is the essence of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Sūtras* expound their philosophy.

The term *darśana* brings out the comprehensiveness of the *Sanātana Dharma* or Vedānta. *Darśana* ordinarily applies to knowledge gained through the senses or *pratyakṣa* as in the example, "This rose is red." It is real and not illusory though it is particular and fleeting. The knowledge gained through reason or *anumāna* is more stable as it gives us some insight into the universal laws which explain the particular facts given in sense-perception. It is thus *darśana* in the sense of reasoning, as in the example, "The Earth goes round the Sun, because it is a planet." Higher than inference is intuition or direct knowledge of God or Brahman, as in the experience of mystics like Nammāḷvār. It is *Brahmadarśana* and is the supreme end of knowledge. Thus *darśana* is going from the physical sense organ to the inner eye of reason and finally to *Brahmacakṣus* or the direct realisation of Brahman. In this way knowledge leads to the more of itself; it grows from sense-perception or *pratyakṣa* to reasoning or *anumāna*. Reasoning develops into direct realisation of Brahman as given in *Sāstra*. All these three ways are inter-connected and complementary and there is no contradiction in their relation. *Veda* is not blind faith as it is a spiritual verity verified by the *Ṛṣis* and other seers of God. The best test of Vedic knowledge is in our direct intuition of God with the guidance

of the *Guru* who has seen Him face to face. In this way *darśana* as sense-knowledge becomes *darsana* or seeing with the inner eye of reason and finally as direct *Brahma-darśana* or experience of God by the *Ṛṣis* and other seers of God. Thus the term *darśana* applied to Hinduism is all-inclusive. It accepts the reality of matter or the world of nature as described by science, but rejeets materialism as the final view of life. It accepts the importance of reason but rejects rationalism as the final view of life. It accepts the importanee of scripture or *śāstra* but rejects theology as blind faith. Hinduism gives a place to science, philosophy, and theology and reconciles them. It says that the best proof of the existence of God is the experience of God.

Hinduism is not a personal religion as it insists on the unity of life as a whole and the duties of each person to the other members of the society. But it does not accept the western view that God needs man's co-operation in the furtherance of His purpose. Man does his work as worship of God in the spirit of *kaiṅkarya* in utter humility. Every act of social service is really the adoration of God as the inner self in all beings. There is no spiritual barrier between one *Jīva* and another.

Hinduism is thus coherent, synthetic and universal. It is coherent because it satisfies every

Pramāṇa and sees no dividing line between reason and revelation. It is synthetic because it gives a place to every system of thought and every school of Vedānta. It is also tolerant because it recognises sects though it rejects sectarianism. It is universal because it affirms the truth that every man is a son of God and he can intuit Him directly. But it is not a mere hotch-potch or electic faith. It provides for different types of people but at the same time emphatically declares that the goal or aim is the same. Every one is *ātman* or spiritual, and there is one *ātman* in and beyond all; and every one can realise Him. The terms applied to Hinduism like *Sanātana Dharma*, *Vedānta* or *Darśana* and *Brahmavidyā* are all synonymous. They all affirm the same truths in spirituality and service.

The chief topics that are dealt with in this work relate to the three reals or *tattvas*, the means of attaining God, including Hindu sociology and methods of worship and the nature of the supreme *puruṣārtha* or *mokṣa*, and finally the value of Hinduism as a universal and catholic religion.

CHAPTER II

GOD

God in Hinduism is called by various names, like *Brahman*, *Īśvara*, *Bhagavān* and *Puruṣottama* and they all refer to the same Being. But many misleading views are held about His nature and qualities and they have to be corrected before the true meaning is explained. The most prevalent mistake is to say that the Hindu makes God in his own image; he worships stones, trees, animals and departed spirits and at best God is man as an excellent person. This view is absurd as it is not Nature but the God in Nature that is adored by him. Man is made in God's image and not God in man's image. It is wrong to say that the Hindu is a polytheist who worships many Gods or Devas. God or *Īśvara* is in all Gods as their inner ruler or *Devadeva* and therefore the Hindu is a monotheist who affirms that Brahman is the one without a second. Another mistake is that Hinduism is pantheistic as it holds that all is God and that God is all. God or *Īśvara* is in all beings as their ruler but is not equated with all beings. He is pure and perfect without any taint or imperfection. Still others say that the Hindu God is a mere abstraction or that it is nothing at all. But all Hindus are

agreed that Religion is essentially faith in a personal God and the same is the highest Being of the philosopher. But the existence of God cannot be proved by reason nor is it a blind faith. Every one can see God face to face directly if he eagerly seeks Him, and then he is sought by God and blessed. Just as man seeks God, God also seeks man and saves him from sinfulness and the sense of separation. This is His redemptive purpose and it is gradually realised in five aspects or stages. *Brahman* is beyond and is pure and perfect and He is called *Para.* Then He becomes *Īśvara* or the Infinite who is called the creator, preserver and destroyer of the Cosmos or the Universe or *Trimurti.* Then He enters into the heart of all *Jīvas* as their inner ruler or *Antaryāmin.* Then on certain occasions of cosmic crisis, He incarnates into the world and these historic incarnations are called *Avatāras.* In the last stage, He is called *Arcā* or permanent incarnation of love in the form of Idols. The one increasing purpose of God in all these stages or descents is the redemption of the *Jīvas* from their career of sin and ignorance. The Hindu scriptures with their infinite motherly tenderness reveal the gradual purpose as *Śruti, Purāṇa, Smṛti, Itihāsa* and *Psalms* in Tamil and other vernaculars. The *Upaniṣads* reveal his perfect nature as *Para* and *Antaryāmin;* the *Purāṇas* describe His nature as

Īśvara doing his threefold cosmic function. The *Itihāsas* describe the redemptive acts of the *Avatāras*. The *Smṛtis* expound his moral and *aesthetic* excellences and lastly the *Psalms* describe His love and easy accessibility to all persons. *Brahman* assumes a bewitching form of beauty so that He may attract the *Jīvas* and annex them to Himself. His five aspects may be briefly explained as follows: *Brahman* is the God of the *Upaniṣads* and he is pure and perfect in the world beyond. His nature cannot be explained adequately but his essential qualities are mentioned in a way as *satyam*, *jñānam*, *anantam* and *ānandam*. *Brahman* is *sat* or reality, or truth itself and is eternal and changeless unlike *prakṛti*. He is ever self-luminous and is more effulgent than all the Suns, Moons and Stars. He is supremely good or *amala* and is free from all imperfections. He is by nature blissful or *ānanda* and love itself. *Brahman* is the one without a second, though He has many qualities and His chief quality is love by which He imparts His nature to the *Jīvas* and makes them like Himself. The whole universe has its being in Him and He is the supreme end of our life.

Brahman in relation to the world or cosmos is called *Īśvara* and it is He who creates it, sustains it and destroys it. He does the three functions of *sṛṣṭi*, creation, *sthiti*, preservation and *saṁ-*

hāra, destruction in the three forms of Brahma Viṣṇu and Śiva. This threefold function is described in detail in the eighteen *Purāṇas* of which the chief are *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. The world consists of *Jīvas* and *Prakṛti* but they are eternal and not created out of nothing. Before creation they were in a latent stage in *Pralaya* like the seed before it becomes the tree. In creation they are given new bodies by *Brahman* according to their previous *karma* and they get new opportunities of becoming free and perfect. In the state of *sthiti* they live and move in the three worlds, Earth, *Svarga* and lower worlds in accordance with their *karma*. They have freedom to make or mar themselves, and Viṣṇu the Lord, sustains them as their very life and He guides justly. Then there comes a time when the world is steeped in wickedness and sin and the Lord Śiva destroys it for the time being. The three functions are done by the same *Īśvara* out of his sweet and loving will and they are the aspects of the one cosmic function, namely to redeem the *Jīvas* from their ignorance and evil. This process goes on endlessly in a circle till all the *Jīvas* attain *mukti*.

Antarayamin.

After creating the Universe, *Brahman* enters into it as its inner self or *antaryāmin*. The

universe consists of the physical world or *acit* or *jaḍa* and also the world of *Jīvas*, sub-human, human and celestial. *Brahman* pervades the whole world of *acit* and *cit* as Vāsudeva and resides in the heart of every *Jiva*, plant, animal, man or *deva* as its innerself or *śarīrin*. Though He is in all inanimate things and *Jīvas*, He is not in any way affected by their imperfections. As their inner self, He gives them life, rules them from within and they all exist for His satisfaction. But His chief purpose in dwelling in their hearts is to free them from their sinfulness and make them into His image. One chief defect pointed out by critics of Hinduism is that it is pantheistic because it says that *Brahman* pervades all beings and is the same as a stone, dog or dog-eater. That view is wrong because Hinduism says that God is in all beings as their inner ruler and is not identical with all beings. Inanimate things are different from *Jīvas* and God is different from both, and He enters into them with a view to be in intimate contact with them. As the Lord of love dwells in the heart of the *Jīva* or man called the louts-heart of *hṛdayakamala*, the human body is extolled as the very temple of God or *Brahmapuri*. As the seat of *Divinity*, it is held sacred, not defiled as a filthy place of sin. God is love and He is in the *Jīva* in order that the *Jīva* may be made Godly.

Avatāra.

The theory of *Brahman* as redeemer is clearly brought out by that of *Avatāra* or Divine incarnation as revealed in the two *Itihāsas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. It is fully revealed by the author of the *Bhagavad-gītā* who is the highest incarnation of God. As the Lord himself says in the *Gītā*, He incarnates into history when virtue or *dharma* declines and is threatened with destruction by *adharma*, or vice. He comes down with a unique form of his own to punish the evil-doer and reward the virtuous man and restore the moral order of the world. The real motive of the incarnation is moral and religious as it consists in redeeming even the evil-doer from his ways of wickedness or sin and blessing the devotee or *bhakta* by revealing His form made of love or *kṛpā*. Even punishment or *daṇḍana* is *dayākārya* as its real object is to reform the offender and not repress him. *Avatāra* is not descent from a higher place to a lower place with a physical body. It is spiritual descent into human and even subhuman planes and is due to divine love and accessibility or *saulabhya*. The *Itihāsas* refer to ten chief *avatāras* of Viṣṇu of which the most important are Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. The earlier *avatāras* like those of the fish, the tortoise, the boar and the man-lion and the dwarf or *Matsya*, *Kūrma*, *Varāha* and *Nara-*

simha and *Vāmana* were made on critical occasions in cosmic history to restore the cosmic, moral and spiritual order and establish the kingdom of righteousness. Rāma was born to punish the evil-doers like Rāvaṇa and establish righteous rule or *Rāmarājya* based on the eternal rules of *dharma.* The *Rāmayāṇa* and the *Gītā* refer to the *avatāra* as the very embodiment of Divine Love and they guarantee salvation or *mukti* to all *Jīvas* regardless of their birth and status, including even the sub-human species. The *Avatāra* is, therefore, extolled and adored as *sarvaloka-rakṣaka* or universal redeemer.

Arcā

The worship of God as *arcā* or *vigraha* made of stone, wood or copper is very popular among the Hindus as a permanent incarnation of Divine grace and love, sanctified by the hymns of the *Āḷvārs,* Nāyanmārs and other devotees. What appears a graven image to the critic or the materialist, is to the devotee with a spiritual eye a speaking Beauty radiating life and love. The so-called idol is not an idea or ideal; an image or symbol; but is the loving, all-pervading presence of the Lord who resides permanently as *arcā* in response to the prayer of the *bhakta.* The image is only the embodiment of divine mercy and it is

easily accessible to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear. The devotee seeks the Lord in a particular form as Viṣṇu, Śiva or Śakti and Divinity beyond all name and form incarnates into that form and he melts with love and is lost in the rapture of communion. The Āḷvārs sought refuge at the feet of the Lord and preferred to be a stone step at the altar of Śrīnivāsa to be trodden by the faithful to even *bhakti* and *mukti.*

Mother.

The doctrine of Motherhood is a special feature of Hinduism as it brings out the tender love and mercy that is the special mark of divine mercy. The idea of *Īśvara* as the almighty and the holy draws out the quality of reverence and awe around in the worshipper as an unworthy creature. The prayer to God as the father in Heaven or *lokapati* is based on the doctrine that every man is made in the image of God or son of God. Even this view does not fully bring out the nature of divine love and mercy and it is only the fact of the motherhood of God that appeals to mercy and love as the very heart of creation. God as ruler or law giver metes out justice to every one according to the strict rules of *karma* and *dharma.* It provides no hope of mercy for the persons who violate the rules and no man is so pure or

sinless as to say that he walks in the ways of righteousness. But God as mother is forgiving and no sin is so sinful as not to merit mercy or *dayā*. Therefore every one seeks the grace of Lakṣmī or Pārvatī or Śakti as the very embodiment of redemptive love. But mercy by itself may encourage favouritism and indulgence and the sinner may exploit the quality of forgiveness. The Hindus therefore worship divinity in the dual form of *Īśvara* and *Īśvarī*. Law is severe and love is indulgent; but in God law and love are wedded together and they are really one though they function as two.

CHAPTER III

JĪVA.

The study of the *Jīva* or the *Ātman* holds a central place in Hinduism. Hinduism insists on the sacredness of life and the solidarity of all *Jīvas*. The *ātman* is to be reflected on and realised before God or *Paramātman* is reflected on and realised. The *ātman* is different from the body made of *prakṛti* and its 23 elements. It is different from the gross body consisting of the five elements, namely, earth, water, fire, air and ether, known as the *pañcabhūtas*. It is not the five *prāṇas* and is more than life. It is not the five sense organs, namely the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the organ of touch. The *ātman* is to be distinguished from the subtle body or *sūkṣmaśarīra*, consisting of *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *ahankāra* or the mind, reason and egoity. Hinduism regards the mind and reason as part of the body and the *ātman* as different from the *sūkṣmaśarīra* and the *sthūlaśarīra* or mind-body. The bodies come and go but the *ātman* never changes and it is eternal or *nitya*. It is beyond birth and death and beyond all mental changes, like the waking state, dream and deep sleep. It is a changeless entity by itself.

The *Jīva* is thus different from its quality of *jñāna* or consciousness. The *jñāna* or quality undergoes changes and not the substance or *ātman*. In the *jāgrat* or waking state, the *Jīva* is conscious of the external world, and its five sense organs are active. It sees things with the eyes, hears sounds with the ears, has the sensations of smell, taste and touch through the nose, the tongue and the skin respectively. Therefore sensations are in the *Jīva* and the objects which cause them are in the external world. In the dream state or *svapna*, the *Jīva* does not perceive things but is only mentally active and enjoys pleasure and pain. In deep sleep or *suṣupti*, the *Jīva* is at perfect rest and its consciousness does not work. Though it is not active, it is not non-existent; it is in a latent state

The *ātman* is by nature self-effulgent, active, joyful and eternal. It is a mode or *aṁśa* of God and though it exists as an eternal entity, it is not separate from Him. It is not born and it does not die. It is beyond the past, the present and the future and is thus beyond time and it is beyond space. The *ātman* is essentially self-conscious and it has the quality of *jñāna* by which it thinks, feels and wills. It is a knowing subject and is not *jaḍa* or inert. It has moral freedom and it is not passive. It is joyful and is not miserable or sick-minded. In this way it

abides in its own spiritual nature and is different from *prakṛti* and God. *Ātman* has its own dignity, intrinsic worth and autonomy. It is not a thing or physical substance like a stone or piece of wood which is *acit* or *jaḍa*. It is not subject to *prakṛti* and its *guṇas* and is free from the instincts, like lust, anger, hatred, jealousy and it has self-mastery. Thus it is a spiritual personality which is free and eternal. It is a knower, a free agent and is joyful. The *ātman* that subjects itself to the evils of *saṁsāra* or the bondage of *karma* is called *baddha-jīva*. It somehow, owing to *avidyā* or ancient ignorance which cannot be explained, mistakes itself for the body made of *prakṛti* and suffers from the series of births and deaths. It is like the prince who exiles himself from his father's throne and joins the wild hunters in the forest, marries a hunter girl, begets children by her and thus gets immersed in savage life. The *ātman* somehow deserts its divine home, enters into the body made of *acit*, wallows in sense life and is caught up in the wheel of births and deaths. Why or how it lapses from the divine heritage and suffers from *avidyā*, *kāma* and *karma*, is a mystery. But the *jīva* alone is responsible for the evils and ills of worldliness and not any outside agency. *Avidyā* makes it identify itself with *prakṛti* and its *guṇas; kāma* makes it seek the pleasures of the senses and suffer from

the pains of animal life and *karma* subjects it to the endless series of births and deaths. But the *Jīva* does not suffer from original sin or unmerited suffering. Though the origin of *avidyā*, or *saṁsāra* cannot be understood, it can be destroyed by *jñāna*, and the *ātman* can go back to God and return no more to *saṁsāra*. But as long as its true nature is concealed by *avidyā*, it is bound by *karma* and is subject to the rounds of births and deaths.

Karma.

The law of *karma* occupies an important place in Hindu Ethics, and it alone solves the problem of the inequalities of life and unmerited suffering. Why does the wicked man prosper in life and the good man suffer from all kinds of misery, physical, mental and social? and why does the new-born child suffer for the sins of its parents and from untold evils and why should there be evil and misery at all if there is a good God? These problems are as old as humanity itself. But of all the solutions offered, the theory of *karma* is the least objectionable. Evil and suffering no doubt exist but each man is responsible for the ills of life he undergoes and not God or the Devil. The theory of *karma* is the law of causation applied to moral life and each

man reaps what he sows. The effect of *karma* or action done by thought, word and deed (or *manas*, *vāk* and *kāya*) is never lost; it is conserved in the mind-body or *śarīra*. The present *karma* is the effect of the past and is the cause of the future. In this way all *karmas* are connected as cause and effect and they form a series without any beginning. The law of causation operates uniformly without any exception and it is the moral law of retribution. If a man does good deeds or *puṇya-karma* he is rewarded and he enjoys the effect of his deeds, like health, longevity of life, prosperity, power and glory; but if he does bad deeds he is punished and he suffers for his bad acts and they lead to disease, poverty and misery. Good and evil thus lead to pleasure and pain and there is a mathematical ratio between virtue and pleasure and vice and suffering. In this way every man is accountable for his good and bad deeds.

Transmigration.

The laws of rebirth and transmigration of *Jīvas* follow as the consequence of *karma*. No child is born out of nothing; it is not born with an empty mind. It does not evolve from the parents and follow the laws of heredity. Every child is born with certain predispositions or *vāsanas* which are retained in the subtle body, as the

effect of no deed is lost. When a person dies, the gross body alone is dissolved but the subtle body of the *Jīva* remains, retaining all the effects of its *karma*. The *Jīva* then enters into a new body suited to its past *karma* and is born again. Thus every birth is the result of past *karma* and is the cause of a new body and birth. Just as a man throws away worn out garments and puts on new garments, the *Jīva* throws away worn out bodies and puts on new bodies. Just as there is continuity in a man's life from infancy to old age and personal identity, so there is continuity of the same *Jīva* in the series of births and rebirths and personal identity. There is identity in spite of numerous births and this is due to the eternity of the *Jīva*.

The adventures of the *Jīva* in the world of *saṁsāra* are not confined to this earth alone. It migrates from body to body according to its *karma* in the cosmic spheres known as the three *lokas* ranging from *Brahmaloka* or *Satyaloka* above to the *Pātālaloka* below. In the celestial worlds above, starting with *Svarga*, the quality of *sattva* is dominant and the *Jīva* enjoys pleasure. In the nether regions, starting with with *Atala*, the quality of *tamas* is dominant and *Pātāla* is the lowest region of darkness and the *Jīva* suffers from pain. But the middle region called *Karma Bhūmi* is influenced by rajas. It is the moral

world of man and it is here that he does good deeds and bad deeds and their effect is reaped in the worlds above and below. There are other *Brahmāṇḍas* like this and they are countless like the stars and they are ruled by *Īśvara* according to the *karma* of the *Jīvas*. The worlds have no spatial meaning but they have hierarchical moral values. Good men ascend to higher regions according to their *karma* and enjoy celestial pleasures and when the effect is exhausted, they come down again and are born in different bodies, sub-human and human. Likewise wicked *Jīvas* suffer from pain and when it is exhausted, they have a new chance and are born again in this moral world.

Freedom.

The scientific view of *karma* in terms of cause and effect is open to the objection that it leads to fatalism and pessimism and that it does not provide any hope of bettering the future. Since every man reaps what he sows, he has to submit weakly to what happens without any moral freedom. He has to endure what cannot be cured and is a slave of circumstances. But the scientific view is only one aspect of *karma* as the more important side is the assertion of the moral freedom or freedom of the will. It says that

every man can control his inclinations like anger, fear, lust, hatred and jealousy and that he can control his future. The scientific theory applies only to *prārabdha-karma* and not to *sañcita-karma.* The former refers to the *karma* that has already happened, like the birth of a person, and which cannot be changed. But the latter refers to the future which is in our hands. Every man is the master or architect of his destiny and not even a God can alter it. If a man has a conflict of desires, like the choice of a career, he has the moral freedom to decide for himself which career he can choose. He can control his passions, like anger or hatred and attain moral victory. But if he chooses the way of the animal, then he once again is chained to the wheel of *saṁsāra.* But he too will one day begin to realise the futility and pain of choosing the animal way of life and turn towards the higher path of freedom through self-control. In either case freedom is inherent in every soul to choose the higher or the lower. A soul has freedom to choose but not the power to get the results of what it chooses as it likes. The results depend on the laws of the worlds and causation (*karma*).

CHAPTER IV

PRAKṚTI.

Every religion deals with the nature and function of the three ultimate entities, Nature, Self and God and their relation. But, it is Hinduism that makes the study exact by calling them *acit*, *cit* and *Īśvara* or *Prakṛti*, *Puruṣa* and *Puruṣottama* or *pāśa*, *paśu* and *pati* and defining their relative positions. The meaning and value of Nature or *prakṛti* will be just considered. Nature refers to the objects in the world, like houses, trees, rivers, seas and mountains. It also includes the sky, the Sun, the Moon and the stars. The scientist is interested in studying the phenomena of nature in all their details. While the chemist seeks to know the various metals and non-metals that compose the world, the astronomer enquires into the nature of the heavenly bodies, like the Sun, the Moon and the stars. The Biologist desires to understand the nature and function of the body. While the scientist observes the phenomena of nature and tries to know the general laws underlying them, the religious man seeks to know Nature and distinguish it from the *Jīva* and God. His primary interest is the knowledge of God who is the creator of the world and his mind goes from the created over to the creator.

We pereeive the world around us through the five senses, namely, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the hand. In perceiving a rose, for example, we see its red colour through the eye, we pluck it from the plant by the hand and smell its fragrance by means of the nose; we taste its sweetness by the tongue and so on. In the same way, we perceive all other things in the world like trees, houses, lakes, rivers and hills. The world above consists of the sky, the Sun, the Moon and the stars. Geography teaches us that the Earth in which we live consists of countries, continents, seas and oceans and it is a planet which goes round the Sun. India, the country in which we live, is a big country with large rivers like the Ganges, mountains like the Himalayas, trees like the banyan and it is very sacred to us as the land of spirituality. The Sun is the centre of heat and light round which six other planets like Jupiter and Saturn move, and the Moon goes round the Earth. The whole is called the Solar system and every star is said to be a Sun with its own planets and moons.

The study of Astronomy impresses us with the vastness of the solar and stellar systems, contrasted with our own smallness. Light travels at the rate of 182,000 miles a second and it takes 3½ years for the light of the nearest star to reach us. From these we know the greatest mystery,

and imagination that is staggered by the infinity of space. What is true of space is also true of time. While space refers to co-existence of things, time is a succession of events.

The object of studying *prakṛti* or *acit* is to know that our body is made of *prakṛit* and that we are different from it. The body is made of earth, water, fire, air and ether and it has five sense organs, and is called the gross body or *sthūlaśarīra*. There is a subtle body called the *sūkṣmaśarīra* and it consists of *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *ahaṅkāra*. Though in western Psychology they are classed as mind different from the body made of matter, Hinduism treats them as physical changes in a subtle form. *Ahaṅkāra* is *egoity*, *buddhi* is determination, *manas* and *citta* are particular perishing changes in the mind. *Śarīra* is thus subtle and gross and may be called psycho-physical. Nothing is really lost and there is only change from one state to another.

Prakṛti, as Sāṅkhya philosophy says, consists of twenty-four *tattvas*, namely, *mahat* (*buddhi*, *citta*) *ahaṅkāra*, the five *jñānendriyas*, the five *karmendriyas* making the body, and the five elements or *pañcabhūtas* and their earlier subtle conditions known as *pañcatanmātras* which make up the body and the world. *Prakṛti* has three qualities, namely, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, Godness or Purity, action and inertia. These three qualities are present in varying proportions in all the twenty-four *tattvas*.

CHAPTER V

DARŚANAS.

It is very difficult to draw a hard and fast line of distinction between religion and philosophy, especially our religion and philosophy. The former deals with doctrines and rituals and the latter with the ultimate problems of life, like the nature of the world, the soul and God and their inter-relations. The one is practical and the other is theoretical. But our ancestors were of a philosophic bent of mind from the beginning and they translated their philosophy into practice. Our religion and philosophy are intermixed and so in an exposition of religion, philosophy legitimately comes in. Our people identify the ultimate reality of philosophy with the highest Godhead of religion and give a theistic colouring to their philosophy. So our religion supplies the spiritual needs of our people and at the same time satisfies the mental wants of a high order. In one isolated school of philosophy this distinction is maintained, and naturally it did not appeal to the majority of the nation. There is therefore much discrepancy between their mode of life and their speculations. It may be all right for highly intellectual and gifted people but for the ordinary man, it is of no use.

Philosophy, as we have said, discusses the nature of the three ultimate entities, matter, soul and God and their interrelation. It also treats of another question which is intimately connected with the relation between soul and God, namely, the life after death, the condition of the soul after its separation from the material body, *i.e.*, the nature of *Mukti*. If the soul travels from this world to another the path taken by it also comes under its purview. This leads to the question of rebirth or transmigration and its cause, *karma*. All these and some related topics come under discussion in philosophy and these problems have been solved differently by different seers. In this way different schools of philosophy have arisen in our country, the chief of which are six, called *darśanas*.

The chief authority for the acceptanee of the existenee of God is the *Veda*, because He cannot be realised by the senses, nor can His existence be inferred from any known facts. There are some schools of philosophy which do not accept the authority of the *Veda* and mainly depend upon perception and inference. As they do not recognise the *Veda*, there can be no place for God in their philosophies. They are the atheistic schools of Cārvākas, Bauddhas and Jainas. They are called *Nāstikas*. We need not consider them here.

Ancient systems.

The six *āstikadarśanas* are: 1. *Sāṅkhya*, 2. *Yoga*, 3. *Vaiśeṣika*, 4. *Nyāya*, 5. *Pūrvamīmāṁsā* and 6. *Uttaramīmāṁsā* or *Vedānta*.

Sāṅkhya and Yoga are similar in their central teaching and so they go together. *Prakṛti*, or *Mūlaprakṛti* as it is called, is independent of *Puruṣa* or soul and is the cause of this world. *Puruṣa* is eternal, *caitanya* or intelligence. *Prakṛti* is composed of three *guṇas* called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. In the state of *Pralaya* the *guṇas* are in equilibrium; in *sṛṣṭi* they are unequal. *Buddhi* is a product of *Prakṛti* when it is near *Puruṣa*. It is also called *mahat* and *antaḥkaraṇa*. *Puruṣa* imagines the activity of *buddhi* to be his own and thus becomes *ātman*. This attribution is *saṁsāra*. From *buddhi* through *ahaṅkāra* are produced the ten senses and their objects (*bhūtas*) and *tanmātras*. *Puruṣa* has no qualities other than *caitanya* and it is eternal. There are innumerable *Puruṣas*. The realisation of the distinction between *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* puts an end to *saṁsāra*. This is *mukti*. *Sāṅkhya* philosophy does not accept God (*Īśvara*). The Yoga philosophy accepts God but attributes no powers of creation, etc., to Him. *Mukti* is the state of *kaivalya* or independence from Nature (*Prakṛti*).

The Yoga system recommends certain practices to control the mind, which lead to the recognition of the distinction between *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*. They are *yama* (control of senses), *niyama* (purification of mind and body), *āsana* (convenient posture), *prāṇāyāma* (control of breath), *pratyāhāra* (control of the mind), *dhyāna* (meditation), *dhāraṇā* (concentration) and *samādhi* (attainment).

Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika similarly agree in their essentials and so can be treated together. The world is made of atoms. The world is created by *Īśvara* and is real. The souls are infinite in number. The Naiyāyikas establish *Īśvara* by inference. The world is composed of parts and is therefore the effect of a cause like a pot. Everything that is produced must have a producer who knows its causes and uses. So there must be a being who produced this world. He must be superior to souls whose knowledge is limited and who are bound by *karma*. The souls are undergoing the pleasure and pain of *saṁsāra* from the eternal course of *karma*. Some *ātmans* who perform the prescribed duties, without any object in view, simply to please God, attain power to perform Yoga by His grace, and by its means attain perpetual freedom from pain, which is *mokṣa* according to these Schools of thought. There will be no more pleasure or pain or know-

ledge. So this sort of salvation is styled *pāṣāṇa-mukti* by others.

The true value of the Nyāya system lies in the extraordinary method of critical enquiry developed in the modern school. The modern Nyāya relegated the discussion of the problem of the ultimate entities to the background and developed into a science of correct knowledge. The discussion of the *pramāṇas* or means of correct knowledge acquired prominence in it. Even here inference is discussed in its minutest detail and in the most comprehensive manner. To the Naiyāyika the *Veda* is authoritative, not because it is eternal but because it is the word of *Īśvara*, and therefore is infallible.

The School of Pūrvamīmāṁsā lays stress on *dharma* or performance of the acts enjoined by the *Veda*. As the course of *karma* is eternal, *saṁsāra* too is eternal. There is no creation, no destruction. Those who perform acts prohibited by the *Veda*, are born as worms and insects or go to hell. Those who perform *karma* for attaining some desire will be reborn again and again. If the *dharma* enjoined in the *Veda* is performed for its own sake, without desiring any benefit, it produces what is termed *apūrva*, which in its turn destroys the connection with *karma* and makes the soul realise itself. This is *mokṣa*

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according to this school. Then the soul enjoys eternal bliss. This school accepts no separate God or *Īśvara*, who will dole out the fruits of the acts.

The Sāṅkhyas, the Yogas and the Pūrva-mimāṁsakas accept an infinite number of *jīvas* who are eternal and who are found in everything; but they do not accept an *Īśvara* who is capable of fulfilling their desires. To the Pūrvamīmāṁsakas, the *Vedas* are eternal and impersonal. The omission to perform the prescribed duties results in sin.

The most popular of the *darśanas* is the Uttaramīmāṁsā or Vedānta as it is also called. Although the others are as much darśanas or schools of thought as this, still they are now only of academic interest and there is no class of people who specifically follow any of those views in their daily life. It can therefore be called the living philosophy of the day and when we hear of Indian philosophy now a days, our mind generally comprehends only the varieties of Vedānta and nothing more. As its name Vedānta implies, its teaching is based mainly on the *Upaniṣads* which form the concluding portion of the *Veda*. While the Pūrvamīmāṁsā, which stresses on *dharma*, is based on the former portion of the *Veda* called the *Brāhmaṇa*, the Vedānta is based

on the latter portion. Hence the names *Pūrva-* and *Uttara-Mīmāṁsā*. There is the school of philosophy which affirms that the two *darśanas* are supplementary to each other and really form one *darśana*. There is no wonder then if the *Uttaramīmāṁsā* also adopts the view that the *Veda* is eternal and impersonal and that the *dharma* taught in it should be followed in practice. The *Bhagavadgītā* in the *Mahābhārata* contains in a nut-shell the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* in very simple language without their illustrative stories and esoteric methods. For this reason, it has become the most popular hand-book of our religion in recent times, especially with the laymen who cannot drink deep in the Upaniṣadic springs. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the light of the world, teaches the ways of *Karma Yoga*, *Jñāna Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga* and *Prapatti Yoga* to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra and makes him fight the battle of life without *rāga* and *dveṣa* and attain His feet by *prapatti*.

The teachings contained in the *Upaniṣads* have been systematised and stated in an aphoristic manner by Bādarāyaṇa or Vyāsa in his *Brahmasūtras*. This is the main text-book of Vedānta. This is interpreted in different ways by different commentators and thus arose several schools of Vedānta. The most important of these are Viśiṣṭādvaita, Advaita, Dvaita and Pāśupata. Śaṅkarā-

cārya is the chief exponent of Advaita philosophy, Rāmānujācārya of Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy, and Pūrṇaprajñācārya of Dvaita philosophy and Śrīkaṇṭha of Pāśupata philosophy.

According to Advaita philosophy, *Brahman* alone is real and everything else, like the self (knower) and *Īśvara* and the world (knowable) and knowledge, is unreal; *Brahman* is *nirviśeṣa* and pure consciousness. *Nirviśeṣa* means undifferentiated. Three kinds of differences are possible; difference between similar things, like the individuals of a class; difference between things of different kinds and difference which exists in the thing itself *i.e.*, between it and its qualities. There is no difference between *Brahman* and the *Jīvas* which are both of the form of *cit*. *Īśvara* is *Brahman* reflected in *māya* or cosmic illusion and *Jīva* is *Brahman* reflected in *avidyā* or subjective illusion. *Brahman* is eternal and by its concealing and perplexing powers, it makes the *Jīvas* unable to realise their real nature and produce different kinds of illusions in them. Still as it is false, there is no question of difference between it and *Brahman*. As *Brahman* itself is consciousness, bliss and truth, there can be no qualities like consciousness, bliss and truth, apart from *Brahman*, and so there can be no difference between *Brahman* and its qualities. *Saṁsāra* is delusion of *Jīvas* by *avidyā* and the disappearance of

avidyā at the rise of *jñāna* derived from the mahāvākyas of the *Upaniṣads* is *mokṣa*. The stock example for the delusion of *Jīvas* by *ajñāna* is the rope or the crack in the ground mistaken for a snake. The false snake-idea is attributed to the real rope (or crack) and the illusion is dispelled on realising the truth of the rope (or crack). A man who desires to attain *mokṣa* or release, must have four qualifications, namely *viveka*, *vairāgya* possession of *śama*, *dama* etc., and sincere desire for release; that is to say, he should know that *Brahman* alone is real and the world is false, renounce everything, have self-control and have thirst for release. *Jñāna* is the only means to *mokṣa* and *karma* and *bhakti* are only aids to *jñāna*. When once the *jñāna* emerges, he becomes a *mukta* even in this body and he is then called a *jīvanmukta*. This is the peculiarity of Advaita. The other schools do not admit *jīvanmukti* and say that *Jīva* attains *mokṣa* by casting off this mortal body which is a real product of *karma*.

There are two other schools which go by the names of their founders, Bhāskara and Yādavaprakāśa. Bhāskara says that *Brahman* is *saguṇa;* there are *Jīvas* and the world, which are also real. By the limiting power of *Brahman* he becomes different and has forms like *buddhi*, senses, body, etc. Parts of *Brahman* having these limitations are called *Jīvas*. Although *Brahman* is indivisible

like space, still just as space limited by a pot acquires the name of pot-space, so *Brahman* with the above limitations is separately termed a *Jīva. Samsāra* is the limitation caused by the *upādhis* or limiting adjuncts of *Brahman.* The *upādhis* are dispersed by true knowledge caused by incessant meditation on *Brahman* after attaining the knowledge of the unity of *Brahman* and *Jīva* by means of Vedic *karma* and *jñāna* together. *Mokṣa* is the union of *Brahman* and *Jīva* on the disappearance of the limitations.

Yādavaprakāśa says that *Brahman* transforms itself into the forms of *cit*, *acit* and *Iśvara* by real *pariṇāma. Cit* is *jīva*; *acit* is body, senses, etc. *Īśvara* is the ordainer of every thing. *Jīva* does not know his unity with *Brahman* and this sense of difference is *saṁsāra.* The fetters of *saṁsāra* can be shaken off by performing good deeds and by God. True knowledge leads to union with *Brahman* and attainment of *mukti.* Even then there is unity as well as difference between *Brahman*, the *Jīva* and the world.

According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, soul (*cit*), matter (*acit*) and God (*Īśvara*) are real. Of these *cit* and *acit* are the special qualities, *prakāra*, of *Īśvara*, and *Īśvara* is the possessor of these qualities or modes (*prakārin*). A *prakāra* is that by the help of which its substratum is known. *Prakāra*

cannot exist without the *prakārin;* therefore *Brahman* possessed of *cit* and *acit* is termed one. As *prakārin* and *prakāra* are intrinsically different, there is difference in their nature. *Acit* is of three varieties, like *śuddhasattva*, *miśrasattva* and *sattvaśūnya*. *Śuddhasattva* is self-effulgent. It is called *Paramapada*. Time is *sattvaśūnya;* but it is also eternal like space. *Miśrasattva*, being subject to *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, develops in the form of the 24 *tattvas* called *prakṛti*, *mahat*, *ahaṅkāra*, the subtle elements, senses, etc. It also forms the body and *ahaṅkāra* of *Jīvas* according to their previous *karma*. *Saṁsāra* is the cycle of repeated births and deaths of embodied souls brought about by *mamakāra* or egoism and *ajñāna*. In the cycle of *karma* and *avidyā* the sins of some persons are destroyed by their virtues. Then they pray to God for redemption. They realise the true knowledge of the Śāstras by the instruction of a good teacher attained by God's grace or *dayā*. They duly practise the obligatory and optional duties according to their station in life and acquire the enriching spiritual qualities of *śama*, *dama*, *tapas*, *śauca*, *ahiṁsā*, *ārjava*, *bhaya*, *abhaya*, *sthāna*, *viveka*, *ahiṁsā*, *dayā*, etc. They surrender themselves to God and due to *bhakti* recollect and reflect on Śāstra and meditate upon His qualities and get rid of ignorance (*ajñāna*) by His grace. They practise

bhaktiyōga and attain *mukti* by *prapatti* and God's grace when they leave the body. *Mukti* is of two kinds, *kaivalya* and reaching *Īśvara*. *Kaivalya* is the enjoyment of the pleasure of the realization of *ātman*. The other is attaining *Īśvara* in *Paramapada* and enjoying his *svarūpa* and eternal bliss. *Īśvara* in *Paramapada* has His own form or *rūpa* of divinely beautiful body. He is one with His beloved ones, Śrī, Bhū, and Nīlā who are His concrete *kṛpā*, and with *nitya-sūris* who are enternally free like Ananta, Garuḍa and Viṣvaksena, and the freed souls or *muktas*. His chief līlā consists in releasing the other *Jīvas* also from *karma* and making them into his likeness.

Viśiṣṭādvaita says that the absolute *Brahman* is the same as Vṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, or Veṅkatesvara. He incarnates on historic occasions in different forms to redeem mankind. In response to the prayers of this devotees, He incarnates permanently as idols or *arcā*, owing to His infinite love. So according to Viśiṣṭādvaita, Viṣṇu or Vāsudeva Himself has His home in the temple of Tirumalai. Out of His infinite love for the erring mortals of Kali, the Infinite has incarnated permanently in Tirumalai and the mortal becomes immortal by utter surrender to His grace. So there is no exaggeration in the statement that Tirupati is Kaliyuga Vaikuṇṭha. Just as the

relation between body and soul is *śarīra-śarīri-bhāva*, so the relation between soul and *Īśvara* is the same. So *Īśvara* is the inner soul of everything in this world and every name and form ultimately applies to *Brahman* or Śrīnivāsa, the self of all selves.

According to Dvaita philosophy, soul (*cit*), world (*acit*) and God (*Īśvara*) are different *tattvas*. God is only the instrumental or efficient cause of the world. He is Viṣṇu himself. He possesses all the auspicious qualities and has a beautiful body made of *jñāna*, *ānanda*, etc. The souls and the world depend on Him. The souls are infinitesimal in size and are different from each other. They are of three kinds according to their *guṇas*—*tamoyogyas*, *nityasamsārins* and *muktiyogyas*. The first class of *Jīvas* dwell in Hell for ever. The last class are eternally free and dwell in *Viṣṇuloka*. The second class of *Jivas* attain direct cognition of God by their practices beginning with renunciation of the results of their actions and ending with meditation on Viṣṇu and enjoy the pleasures of *muktas* according to their nature. If they are free from impressions (*vāsana*) of hatred etc., they attain *mukti* and enjoy supreme pleasure. The relation between God and soul is that of *svāmin* and *dāsa* (master and servant). So the *summum bonum*

of life, according to this school is service to God, here in this world and beyond.

According to *Pāśupata*, there are three eternal entities, God (*pati*), Soul (*paśu*) and Nature (*pāśa*). God is the supreme *pati* or *Parameśvara* He is only the instrumental or efficient cause of creation while the atoms are the material cause. The *Jīva* (soul) is different from *Īśvara* and matter but is self-conscious. It is like a crystal and assumes the form of that with which it comes in contact. When caught up in *pāśa* which is made up of ignorance, inertness and desire (*āṇava, māya* and *kāmya*) it undergoes *saṁsāra* like *pāśa*. When the *Jīva* contacts *Pati* it becomes like Him. The *Jīva* attains *mukti* by following certain practices which free it of its ignorance etc. *Mukti*, according to this system, is *Śiva-sārūpya* (likeness to Śiva) and not *Śivaikya* (identity with Śiva). Śiva, it says, is love itself and by His grace (*aruḷ*), He makes the *Jīva* free from its impurities. The highest form of *jñāna* consists in service to Śiva and His devotees.

Śaiva and Śākta philosophies are both comprised in Pāśupata. In Śākta, Śakti or Devī (called *Caṇḍī*) is supreme. She is worshipped in three forms, Kālī, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. Owing to the love of Śakti, the world emanates from Śiva and merges in Him. By means of *jñāna* and *bhakti*, the Jīva attains *mukti* and becomes

one with Śiva. Certain sects of Śāktas engage themselves in non-Vedic practices, like worshipping God in a wine-pot, smearing the body with ashes from the burning ground, etc.

Mediaeval Schools.

The Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy with its doctrines of *bhakti* and *prapatti* and emphasis on the equality of all *bhaktas* and *prapannas*, irrespective of caste or sex, appealed to the minds of all people and it soon spread all over the country. Many pious people came forward in Northern India to propagate the faith. But their teachings were coloured by their temperamental bias. The theistic tinge which Viśiṣṭādvaita assumed in the identification of *Brahman* (*Paramātman*) with Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) caught the imagination of these saints and they identified Him with those particular forms of Nārāyaṇa which attracted their minds. In whatever form He is adored, He appears in that form and accepts the devotion.

Rāmānanda was the first of these teachers. He taught that *Īśvara* resides in every *Jīva* and He is Rāma, the righteous. The force of his personal attraction and teachings of Rāmānanda can be judged from the fact that even Muslims became his disciples. Kabir followed his teachings and incorporated them with Islam and evolved his School of Kabirpanthis.

Vallabha taught that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was *Brahman.* His form is made of spiritual love and it is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. He sports with the *Jīvas* in Gokula. Creation is the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa. *Bhakti* is the only means of attaining Kṛṣṇa. *Bhakti* ·is irrepressive love or *puṣṭi.* On release from the body the *bhakta* goes to Gokula, which is beyond *Vaikuṇṭha,* and enjoys the bliss of communion with Kṛṣṇa.

Caitanya taught the Rādhā Kṛṣṇa cult. The absolüte *Brahman* is Śri Kṛṣṇa who is eternally sporting with Rādhā, his beloved 'other'. He has a bewitching form of beauty and he attracts the *Jīvas* to him by his entrancing beauty. *Bhakti* or *prēma* is the only means of attaining the bliss of Kṛṣṇa. The saint taught a number of *bhāvas* in the love towards Kṛṣṇa, like those of God as ruler, master, mate, etc., of which the best is the *bhāva* of Kṛṣṇa as spiritual bridegroom. The love of Kṛṣṇa exceeds the pleasures of Vaikuṇṭha.

Modern Religious movements.

Brahmosamaj, Aryasamaj and Ramakrishna Mission are effective reactions to the proselytising influence of alien religions. They are movements in response to their ideas of the needs of the age.

CHAPTER VI

LITERATURE.

The *Vedas* form the fundamental basis of our religion. They are the words of *Brahman* and are said to be Brahman itself. These were uttered by great Ṛṣis (Seers). They are the oldest literary specimens of the world. Their language is an ancient form of Sanskrit. The *Vedas* are four in number called the *Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda* and *Atharvaveda*. Each Veda comprises two parts, called the *Karmabhāga* and the *Tattvabhāga*—the portion that treats of action (*karma*) and the portion that treats of reality (*tattva*). The conduct to be followed by those who aspire to acquire *puṇya* or virtue is detailed in the former portion and the eternal truths of life are described in the latter portion. *Brahman* is that by knowing which everything is known and so the portion of the *Veda* which treats of *Brahman* is the most important portion. It is called the Vedānta or the *Upaniṣad*. The former portion may again be divided into two parts called the *Mantra* part and the *Brāhmaṇa* part. The *Brāhmaṇa* portion refers to the details of the ritual and indicates the particular mantra to be recited in each ritual act; the *Mantra* portion supplies the mantras.

The two parts are mixed up in the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda;* in all the other *Vedas* they are found separate.

Although the *Ṛṣis* first uttered Vedas, we should not think that they composed them. The *Vedas*, according to Hinduism are eternal. They have been existing for all time and are beyond time. It is said that even the world is created by Brahman in accordance with the *Vedas*. The *Veaas* are transmitted to the men in different ages either by God himself or through sages inspired by Him. So the sages, by the grace of God, visualised the *Vedas* and transmitted them to us. As they are not composed by men, the *Vedas* are infallible. The minds of men are fallible and so whatever a man does is liable to error. But the *Vedas* are not so. There can be no mistake in them and they compel recognition and response. They are eternal, spiritual imperatives which require to be spiritually obeyed. In accordance with the above view, the language of the *Vedas* is called the *Devabhāṣā* or Divine language. The linguistic evidence is in favour of the high antiquity of the *Vedas* and its eternal holiness. The age of the *Vedas* cannot be historically determined as they are beyond history and are super-historical, not merely pre-historical.

Though the last portion of every *Veda* is the *Upaniṣad* or Vedānta, still *Upaniṣads* are not

all attached to the *Vedas*. A large number of the *Upaniṣads* arose on the model of the Vedānta. The *Aitareya*, the *Kauṣītaki*, the *Kaṭha*, the *Taittirīya*, the *Īśa*, and the *Chāndogya* are the last portions or Vedānta of the respective *Vedas*. Besides these there are some more *Upaniṣads* which are as important and authoritative as the above. They are the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, the *Śvetāśvatara*, the *Muṇḍa* and the *Māṇḍukya*, the *Maitrāyaṇīya*, and the *Kena Upaniṣads*. Of these the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* belongs to the *Śuklayajurveda*, the *Śvetāśvatara* and the *Maitrāyaṇīya* belong to the *Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda*, the *Kena* to the *Sāmaveda* and the *Muṇḍa* and the *Māṇḍukya* to the *Atharvaveda*. Excluding the *Śvetāśvatara* and the *Maitrāyaṇīya*, the remaining *Upaniṣads* are generally termed as the *Ten Upaniṣads*. They are the authorities for our Vedānta system and are frequently quoted by our Ācāryas in support of their views. Besides these, there are nearly a hundred other *Upaniṣads* which underlie our sectarian practices and symbols.

It should not be supposed that every *Upaniṣad* gives a succinct account of any one system of philosophy. They are rather discussions on different topics comprised in the systems. The whole body of *Upaniṣadic* literature has been studied, and the contents have been systematised and expounded by Bādarāyaṇa or Vyāsa in his

Uttaramīmāṁsā Sūtra or *Darśana.* The *Sūtras* and the Upaniṣadic statements or *śrutis* on which they are based are differently interpreted by different Ācāryas according to the system of philosophy advocated by them. In this way different systems of Vedānta arose, like *Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita, Śaiva* etc. Most of the Ācāryas wrote commentaries on the important *Upaniṣads* in accordance with their systems of philosophy.

The next authority for our religion is the *Dharma Śāstras.* They are of two categories, the *Sūtras* and the *Smṛtis.* The *Sūtras*, as their name indicates, are in the form of aphorisms and the *Smṛtis* are in metrical form. If *śruti* is what is directly revealed to the Ṛṣis, the *Smṛti* is what is recollected by them and recorded afterwards. The *Dharmaśāstras* give the code of conduct applicable to each section of society and to the whole society in common. All that is contained in the *Dharmaśāstras* is said to be taken from the *Vedas* which teach fundamental ethical truths and they claim to teach nothing new. If there is any explicit contradiction between what is laid down in the *Vedas* and what is taught in the *Dharmaśāstras*, the former are to be followed in preference to the latter, as they are absolutely and universally true. If there is anything new in the *Dharmaśāstras* and there is nothing corres-

ponding to it in the available *Vedas*, we have to suppose that the corresponding portion of the *Veda* is now extinct but was available to the authors of the *Dharmaśāstras*. We should not discard what is laid down in the *Dharmaśāstras* on account of this accident. But when the *Dharmaśāstras* of two Ṛṣis prescribe different courses of conduct with regard to the same subject, we should not reject either or both as wrong, but it should be understood that we are at liberty to follow either course at our option. But if there is tradition in our family with regard to one of the courses, we should follow that alone as such a tradition perpetuates an ancient Dharma practised by the rest.

The *Dharmasūtras* are the concluding portions of the *Kalpasūtras*. The *Kalpa* is one of the six *Aṅgas* of the *Vedas*. They are *Śikṣā* or phonetics, *Vyākaraṇa* or Grammar, *Chandas* or prosody, *Nirukta* or derivation and *Kalpa* or procedure. The whole *Kalpa* teaches us all the procedure for the Vedic rites, domestic rites and duties to humanity in general. But all *Dharmasūtras* that we inherit are not the concluding portions of *Kalpasūtras*. Some Ṛṣis have written complete *Kalpasūtras* while others wrote only particular portions. To the former class belong the *Dharmasūtras* of Āpastamba, Hiraṇyakeśin, Bodhāyana and Vaikhānasa. The *Dharma-*

sūtras of Gautama and Vasiṣṭha are independent works and no *Kalpasūtras* by the same authors are available.

The traditional number of *Smṛtis* or law books is eighteen. They are (1) *Manusmṛti*, (2) *Parāśarasmṛti*, (3) *Vasiṣṭhasmṛti*, (4) *Sañkha-smṛti*, (5) *Likhitasmṛti*, (6) *Atrismṛti*, (7) *Viṣṇu-smṛti*, (8) *Hārītasmṛti*, (9) *Yamasmṛti*, (10) *Añgi-rassmṛti*, *(11) Uśanassmṛti*, *(12) Saṁvartasmṛti*, (13) *Bṛhaspatismṛti*, (14) *Kātyāyanasmṛti*, (15) *Dak-ṣasmṛti*, *(16) Vyāsasmṛti*, *(17) Yājñavalkyasmṛti* and (18) *Śātātapasmṛti*. All these *Smṛtis* are equally authoritative but the *Manusmṛti* has commanded universal respect from the authors of all other *Smṛtis* and authors of the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* because it is the most comprehensive and the most elucidative or clear. The *Parā-śarasmṛti* is considered to be the standard work for this *Kali* age. It enumerates exhaustively the special rules for the *Kali* age. It is said in the *Manusmṛti* itself that Manu's laws apply to the *Kṛtayuga*, Gautama's laws to the *Tretāyuga*, the laws of Śaṇkha and Likhita to the *Dvāpara-yuga* and those of Parāśara to the *Kaliyuga*.

There are some other works which are written by the Ṛṣis like the *Dharmaśāstras* and which are considered as equally authoritative although they do not strictly come under the

category of *Dharmaśāstra*. These are *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, *Āgamas* and *Tantras*. The *Itihāsas* describe how the duties taught in our *Smṛtis* are discharged by different individuals, how men should act when there is apparent conflict of duties, and thereby create in the minds of people a desire to follow *dharma* and to shun *adharma*. The *Purāṇas* describe how the incarnations like those of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa come down to the level of man in order to elevate men to the divine level and reveal to us the mighty power of God by describing the course of creation and destruction and the right and wrong manner of governing the people. The *Āgamas* contain rules for the construction of temples and shaping of *arcās* and the consecration and worship of the latter. The method of pleasing the Gods in an easy manner and thereby attaining advantages in this and the next world of *svarga* and finally *mokṣa* by following the Yoga is described in the *Tantras*.

The *Itihāsas* are the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. The *Rāmāyaṇa* teaches how the conduct of the people towards different persons is to be regulated by upholding ideals for each case through the story of Rāma and Sītā. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is as much a story of Rāma as of Sītā and teaches *strīdharma* also. The way in which a son should obey his father, the manner in which the brothers should love each other, the

way in which the wife should obey her husband, the manner of the devotion of a servant towards his master, how friends should love each other and work for mutual good, how men and women should conduct themselves towards each other, the feminine virtues of gentleness and love and several other principles of our religion are taught through the life and adventures of Rāma and Sītā. It also brings home to all people the principle that people should be honoured for their moral worth and not for their birth and that pious creatures too deserve respect and service. Above all the *Rāmāyaṇa* is termed a *śaraṇāgati-śāstra* and teaches the cardinal principle of our religion that a man who sincerely seeks another for protection should never be abandoned. God as redeemer is anxious to save mankind even if they at least once pray for His mercy. The book also illustrates the principle that God incarnates Himself here in times of historic crises in different forms when the world is filled with vice, for the purpose of saving the virtuous and punishing the wicked. Punishment is only an act of kindness to redeem the wicked from their career of vice and every effort is made to reform them. This last principle is better illustrated by the other great *Itihāsa*, the *Mahābhārata*. Several other principles of our religion are taught in this work through its episodes such as truthfulness, godliness, purity

of women, mercy towards supplicants, forbearance, penance and so on. So many principles of our religion are illustrated in this work that it is termed a *Dharmaśāstra* itself and is even called the fifth *Veda*. Whole chapters in it are devoted mainly to teach *dharma* incidentally in the course of the story for the time being. The *Mokṣadharma*, the *Viduranīti*, the *Sanatsujātīya*, and the *Anugīta* are some such important sections. But the most important of these which has acquired universal reputation is the *Bhagavadgīta* (the Lord's song or teaching) in eighteen chapters of about 700 stanzas. Although a chapter in the epic, it has acquired independent recognition by virtue of the highest teaching enshrined in it. At the commencement of the Great Battle, Arjuna feels doubt as to the course of conduct he should follow and seizing the occasion, a sermon on conduct has been taught to him and through him to the world. *Karmayoga*, *Jñānayoga* and *Bhaktiyoga* are taught in all their detail in the first, second and third sextants of the work. The fundamental principles of our religion which are of universal appeal have been clearly taught in this work. The general principles that none should shrink from doing his duty in whatever difficult position he is placed, that everyone who sincerely worships God, in whatever form it may be, will certainly be saved, that the mercy

of God alone can save humanity from their sins and the like taught in it have made it the universal text-book of all religions and secured for it world-wide recognition. Our people have recognised it as one of the three basic authorities of our religion and philosophy by including it in the *Prasthāna-traya*. There are innumerable commentaries on it and translations of it. Everyone should read it and put the principles taught in it in practice.

The *Purāṇas* describe the history of the world. They describe how the world is created, how it is preserved and governed and finally how it is periodically destroyed. The world of *cid-acit* is eternal; it is subtle in *pralaya* and gross in *sṛṣṭi*. They show how the morality of the world is preserved by God, how the wicked are punished and then redeemed and the virtuous saved. They describe the different methods and incarnations of God at critical periods in the world to maintain its moral and spiritual order. They teach the principles of our religion through their episodes. They also proclaim the glory or *vibhūti* of the *arcāvatāra* of God through their descriptions of the power of the different *kṣetras* and they also describe the holy *tīrthas* in our country. They describe the methods of penance and devotion to God to attain salvation. They therefore form one of the important class of text-books for our

religion. The most important of them are eighteen in number. They are divided into three classes called *Sāttvika, Rājasa* and *Tāmasa* according as they extol the glory of Viṣṇu, Brahma or Śiva.

There are an equal number of *Upapurāṇas* which mostly deal with the glories of different Gods.

The *Āgamas* are treatises by sages on the practical side of religion. They contain rules for the construction of the temples, making of *arcā*, consecration of the temples and idols, worship of the *arcā* and expiatory ceremonies for acts of commission and omission. Incidentally they treat of town-planning to show the place of temple in a planned town and the qualifications of the worshipper. The various incarnations of God are also represented in *arcā* and different kinds of *arcā* are consecrated for different purposes of worship. These *Āgamas* are two-fold,—the *Vaiṣṇava* and the *Śaiva*, according as they treat of the temples, *arcā* and worship of the different forms of Viṣṇu or Śiva. The Pāñcarātra and the Vaikhānasa are the Vaiṣṇava āgamas. The former is said to be taught by Nārāyaṇa Himself, while the latter is taught by Saint Vikhanas. The ancient works on the *Āgamas* are called the *Saṁhitās*. They are *Pādma-*

saṁhitā, *Paramasaṁhitā*, *Sāttvatasaṁhitā*, *Kapiñjalasaṁhitā*, *Īśvarasaṁhitā*, *Parāśarasaṁhitā*, *Bhāradvājasaṁhitā*, *Ahirbudhnyasaṁhitā* and *Viṣṇutilaka*. The Vaikhānasa Saṁhitas are said to be four composed by the four Ṛṣis, Atri, Marīci, Kāśyapa and Bhṛgu. All the works by these authors have not survived to us. Śaiva āgamas are said to be twenty-eight in number.

Each *Āgama* has four sections in it called (1) *Caryā* (2) *Kriyā* (3) *Yoga* and (4) *Jñāna*. The first treats of the daily duties; the second of the worship of God; the third of the practices tending to the control of the senses and for the meditation of God. The last treats of the nature of God, the constitution of the body and *mukti*.

Tantras are practical treatises of religion. By means of worship of *arcā* or *yantras*, by means of repetition of *mantras* or mystic utterances, by means of *upāsanas*, they provide courses for developing the hidden power in man leading to the realization of God. These are also used for the attainment of worldly desires.

All the above literature is in the Sanskrit language. But besides this, there is a large body of religious literature in Tamil which is considered to be equally authoritative in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Śaiva siddhānta. They are works of the Vaiṣṇava Āḷvārs and Śaiva Nāyanmārs. They

are a class of highly gifted saints who, by their wisdom and conduct, have realised God and had communion with Him. Their works are the outpourings of their religious consciousness. The Vaiṣṇava religious hymns consist of four thousand stanzas and are collectively known as the *Divyaprabandham*. The Āḷvārs or Vaiṣṇava saints are twelve in number and their works, as they are collected in the *Divyaprabandham*, are as follows. The first three Āḷvārs, Poygai Āḷvār, Bhūtat Āḷvār and Pey Āḷvār have each 100 stanzas to their credit in *Īyarpā*. Tirumaḷiśai Āḷvār has to his credit 96 stanzas in *Īyarpā* and *Tiruccandaviruttam* (120 stanzas) in *Mudalāyiram*. Nammāḷvār, the greatest of the Āḷvārs, has four compositions to his credit, *Tiruviruttam* (100 stanzas), *Tiruvāśariyam* (7 stanzas), *Periyatiruvandādi* (87 stanzas), all included in the *Īyarpā*, and *Tiruvāymoḷi*, consisting of 1102 stanzas. It is said that these four poems stand respectively for the four *Vedas*, *Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Atharvaveda* and *Sāmaveda*. The last is the most famous of the Tamil religious poems and contains the essence of the Vaiṣṇava religion and is profusely commented upon. Kulaśekhara Āḷvār composed the 105 stanzas of *Perumāḷtirumoḷi* included in the *Mudalāyiram*. Periyāḷvār composed the famous *Tiruppallāṇḍu* of 12 stanzas and *Tirumoḻi* consisting of 461 stanzas, both included in the *Mudalāyiram*.

Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi Āḷvār composed *Tirumāḷai* (45 stanzas) and *Tiruppaḷḷiyeḷicci* (10 stanzas), both included in the *Mudalāyiram*. Tiruppāṇāḷvār has only 10 stanzas to his credit in the *Mudalāyiram*, called *Amalanādipirān*. Tirumaṅgai Āḷvār has much to his credit in the Prabandham. He is the author of *Periyatirumoḷi* (1084 stanzas), *Tirukkurundāṇḍagam* (20 stanzas), *Tiruneḍundāṇḍagam* (30 stanzas), *Tiruveḷukuṭrirukkai* (1 stanza) *Siriyatirumaḍal* and *Periyatirumaḍal*. The number of stanzas in the last two poems is differently assessed by different scholars. The *Kaṇṇinuṁśiruttāmbu* of Mathurakavi Āḷvār and the *Nacciyārtirumoḷi* (143 stanzas) and the famous *Tiruppāvai* (30 stanzas) of Āṇḍāḷ are also included in the *Mudalāyiram*. The above poems a long with the *Irāmānujanūttandādi* of Tiruvarangattamudanār constitute the 4000 stanzas of the *Divyaprabandham*. Highest philosophical truths are embodied in these Tamil hymns of the gifted Āḷvārs and so these are considered as important for Vaiṣṇava religion as the *Upaniṣads;* and the two, the Tamil *Divyaprabandham* and the Sanskrit *Upaniṣads* are styled *Ubhayavedānta*. But the most significant point about the literature in the vernacular is that it reveals the greatness of the *arcāvatāra* or idol-worship. It embodies the spiritual experiences of the Āḷvārs in the different temples. In this manner Śrinivāsa has been extolled by nine of the Āḷvārs.

The Śaiva religious hymns in Tamil are collectively known as the *Tirumurais*. They are twelve in number. The *Tevāram* of Tirujñāna-sambandar, Tirunāvukkarasu (Appar) and Sundar murti constitutes the first seven *Tirumurais*. *Tiruvācakam* and *Tirukkovayār* of Māṇikyavācakar form the eight. *Tiruvicaippā* and *Tiruppallāṇḍu* of different authors from the ninth. Tirumūlar's *Tirumantram* is the tenth. The eleventh consists of 40 poems by 12 authors. *Periyapurāṇam* (otherwise called *Tiruttoṇḍarpurāṇam*) of Sekkilar constitutes the 12th. Here too the glory of the *arcāvatāra* of Śiva is mainly described. The Tamil hymns are designed to inspire feelings of veneration and love towards God besides presenting valuable truths. The devotional songs of Tāyumānavar and Paṭṭinattār addressed to Śiva are as popular amongst the Śaivites as the psalms of the Nāyanmārs.

Śaivism is embodied in the philosophic system known as Śaiva Siddhānta and Śaiva Siddhānta is therefore called the philosophy of Śaivism and it is traced to the *Upaniṣads* like Vaiṣṇava Siddhānta. It is chiefly contained in *Śivajñāna-bodham* by Maikaṇḍan Sivajñānasiddhiyār.

There is a large body of similar religious hymns in the Sanskrit language also. These constitute the Stotra literature. They are small

hymns consisting of from one to 100 stanzas in praise of a deity, describing the devotee's absolute surrender to God, admitting his sinful nature and his utter helplessness to attain *mukti* unless the deity out of His natural and immense mercy pities his condition and redeems him from his career of sins. They reveal the *bhakti* or devotion of the devotee and his earnest desire for union with God. The number of these devotional hymns is very large and only a few important and early ones can be mentioned here to serve as examples. The stotras by Śaṅkarācārya are significant as they are composed by a philosopher who held that *Brahman* was formless and attributeless. The *Stotraratna* of Yāmunācārya comprises 65 stanzas and embodies high philosophical truths. The *Gadyatraya* of Rāmānuja is an equally important triplex. In the first he seeks the mercy and protection (*Śaraṇāgati*) of God. In the second he prays to Śrīraṅganātha of Śrīraṅgam. In the third he prays to God to accept him. The *Mukundamāla* of Kulaśekhara Āḷvār is another famous hymn of forty stanzas. The importance of *bhakti* or devotion and the mercy of God are clearly brought out in this hymn. *Śrīguṇaratnakośa* is another important hymn of 61 stanzas. Then there are poems praising several *arcāvatāras*, like, *Śrīraṅgarājastava*, *Śrī Varadarājastava*, etc. The *Nāmāvalis* may also be

mentioned here as they help us to meditate upon God by repeating His various names.

The devotional songs of Tyāgarāja in praise of Rāma deserve special mention. The songs of Annamācāryulu on Śrī Veṅkateśvara are full of high devotional fervour.

CHAPTER VII

VARNAS AND ĀŚRAMAS.

Although our religion and philosophy consider *mokṣa* (beatitude) as the primary object of our desire still they recognise three other objeets which are to be attained consistent with the primary one. They are *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. These three are collectively known as *Trivarga* and along with *mokṣa*, as the *caturvarga*. These are not only ends in themselves but are also means to the principal object, *mokṣa*. *Dharma* is the practical method by which *mokṣa* can be attained. It regulates the conduct of a person who aims at *mokṣa*. It may be called a code of Ethics. The underlying principle in our code of Ethics is that one should prefer what is good or meritorious (*śreyas*) to what is pleasant or pleasurable (*preyas*). The man who prefers the latter is called ignorant while the man who prefers the former is called wise. The wise man knows that the pleasures of the world are transitory and perishing and that everlasting pleasure is only *mokṣa*. Even the joys of *svarga* and *Brahmaloka* which are gained by sacrifices and *tapas* are only transitory. So if a man has to attain everlasting joy, he must control his senses and realise his self. This is possible by following

the course of *dharma*. When we follow *dharma*, we must follow it without any object in view, *i.e.*, for its own sake, dedicating it to God. Then only will it contribute to our good or *śreyas*. Again *dharma* includes not only rules of conduct but also principles of character. The latter are more important and produce better results than the former. The former without the latter are ineffective.

Dharma regulates the conduct of man in all aspects of life—religious, social, political and healthy. It is divided into two categories *viz.*, *varṇa-dharma* and *āśrama-dharma*. Our religion has divided the society into four classes or *varṇas* according to the nature and aptitudes of its members and prescribed *dharma* for each class. Again it has divided man's life into four stages or *āśramas* and prescribed *dharma* for each stage. The division of the society into four classes or *varṇas* is peculiar to our country. For that reason it need not be declaimed or discouraged. It is based on the principle of social economy. So it is prescribed as one of the duties of the king to maintain the *varṇa-dharma* and *āśrama-dharma*. If a king is not able to maintain *dharma* properly, he is described as an incompetent king. He is given power to punish people who do not follow the *dharma* of their class and state in society.

It is not possible to mention all the *varṇa-dharmas* and *āśrama dharmas* here but a few important ones will be noticed. It is the duty of the Brahman to study and teach the *Veda*, to perform sacrifices for himself and for others, and to give and receive gifts. The first in each pair of duties enumerated above is also prescribed for the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya. The special duty of a Kṣatriya is to protect the people and their *dharma*. Agriculture, cattle rearing and trade are assigned to the Vaiśya. The only duty assigned to the Śūdra is to help the other castes in carrying on their duties. In this way, the *varṇas* specialise in religion, politics, economics and labour according to their station in life, whatever its nature.

In addition to the above social duties, certain religious duties are enjoined, most of which are common to all the castes. These are comprehensively known as the *saṁskāras*. They are *Garbhādhāna* or ceremony for conception; *Pumsavana* or ceremony of wishing a male child; *Sīmantonnayana* or ceremonial parting of the hair; *Jātakarma* or birth rites; *Nāmakaraṇa* or naming; *Annaprāśana* or giving solid food to the child; *Caula* or tonsure; *Upanayana* or investiture with the sacred thread; and *Vivāha* or marriage. After *Upanayana*, the study of the *Veda* is prescribed and at the end of the Vedic

study five more *saṁskāras* are prescribed. So to the Hindu, life itself is a sacrament from birth to death or conception to cremation. Every act is an adoration of God including the smallest details of life relating to birth, food, study and duties of the family.

In addition to the above *saṁskāras* which are enjoined once for a life time, there are some others which are to be performed daily or at regular intervals. The daily duties are the performance of the five *mahāyajñas* viz., *brahmayajña* or reciting the *Veda; pitṛyajña* or oblation to the *pitṛs* or forefathers; *devayajña* or worship of God; *bhūtayajña* or offering *bali* or food to all creatures; and *manuṣyayajña* or feeding the guests. The aim of these *yajñas* is to bring out the solidarity and unity of all living beings, human, super-human and sub-human and the obligations of the house-holder to the world in general owing to his birth and station in life. Then there are the twenty-one sacrifices—7 *pākayajñas*, 7 *haviryajñas* and 7 *somayajñas*—which may be performed some at specific times and others at suitable times, but all at the option of the doer. But *śrāddha*, one of the *pākayajñas*, is considered as essential and one who omits it is counted as a *patita*, because every one owes his life to the parents and progenitors.

The object of these *saṁskāras* is to make the life of a man spiritual. Our people are of the opinion that man is not on an animal level and should not be guided by the animal instincts of self-preservation and multiplication and feelings of anger, fear and jealousy. Being endowed with mind and reason, he should rise above the animal level and feel that he has come from God and has to return to God and that he should make himself fit for it. He is morally free and not bound by instincts like animals. So he must live and move in a spiritual world and his dress, food and acts must have a spiritual meaning. Every *saṁskāra* is intended to be an act of purification making the soul more and more fit to approach God. So *Upanayana* is considered to be the most important *saṁskāra* as, in it, the man is initiated into the worship of God by means of Vedic stanzas and is invested with the sacred thread in token whereof. Worship of God is the essence of religious life. Marriage is also a spiritual act which enables a man to perform Vedic rites which exalt him spiritually and to continue the race which redeems him from his debt to the fore-fathers. By these *saṁskāras*, one's life becomes living in and for God.

For this purpose our religion teaches not only the above *saṁskāras* but also detailed rules of conduct which are ethical aids to spirituality.

Some of these will be defined below. 1. *Śauca* or *śuddhi* is keeping the mind, speech and body clean. Keeping the mind clean is to prevent it from lapsing from *sattva* into *rajas* and *tamas*. Keeping the speech clean is not to utter lies or words calculated to cause pain to other beings. 2. *Viveka* is discrimination between good and bad, between body and soul. 3. *Ārjava* is identity of purpose between body, speech and mind. 4. *Samatva* is feeling pleasure and pain at the pleasure and pain of others. 5. *Tuṣṭi* is being satisfied with what one has. 6, 7. *Śama* and *Dama* are controlling the mind and the senses from being attracted by undesirable objects. 8. *Dāna* is giving to others what one has. 9. *Tyāga* is renouncing what is not good to oneself. 10. *Dayā* is pity or sympathy for the suffering of others. 11. *Mārdava* is association with goodness. 12. *Lajjā* is moral sensitiveness. 13. *Kṣamā* is the spirit of endurance or ability to bear pain caused by others, or by extreme cold or heat. *Kṣānti* and *titikṣā* are synonymous with this. 14. *Dhairya* is courage to do one's duties even in the face of extreme danger. 15. *Śraddhā* is reverence to the elders. This is otherwise called *Āstikya*. 16. *Tapas* is physical exercise to make the body fit for religious duties. 17. *Sthairya* is the will to do one's duty. 18. *Vairāgya* is the renunciation of sense inclinations. The practise

of these good qualities is given preference over the above-named *saṁskāras*. Even though a man undergoes all the above *saṁskāras*, it is of no avail if he does not possess these qualities; if, on the other hand, a man possesses these qualities, it does not matter even if he does not undergo some of the *saṁskāras*

Hinduism not only insists on the practice of these virtues but also on the avoidance of vices of which the chief are given below. 1. *Kāma* is the desire for sensual pleasures. 2. *Krodha* is anger causing pain to others. 3. *Lobha* is the instinct of possession. 4. *Moha* is delusion or mistaking one thing for another. 5. *Mada* is conceit arising from egoistic enjoyment and it causes moral confusion. 6. *Mātsarya* is envy or jealousy at other's prosperity. 7. *Dambha* is self-advertisement. 8. *Māna* is the feeling of superiority to others and insulting them. 9. *Pāruṣya* is conduct leading to other's displeasure. 10. *Ajñāna* is ignorance of what is good and what is bad. 11. *Ahaṅkāra* is egoism expressed in terms of self-elation and the feeling of superiority to others. It includes identification with the body. 12. *Mamakāra* is the sense of possession or mineness. 13. *Pramāda* is perversity due to ignorance. 14. *Īrṣyā* is envy. 15. *Asūya* is attributing evil to good people. Of these the first six, *viz.*, *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and

mātsarya are the chief and are called *ariṣaḍvarga* or the six inner enemies of spirituality. Of these again the first three, *kāma*, *krodha* and *lobha* are considered to be more baneful than others. Lastly *kāma* is the worst of all the enemies as it is the source of all the other vices.

A man's life is divided into four parts and each is called an *āśrama*. The four *āśramas* are stages in the pilgrim's progress to God or stages in the process of spirituality. They make the man given to secular life turn his mind towards spiritual life and finally lead to the realization of the supreme Self. The first *āśrama* is *brahmacarya.* A man enters *brahmacarya* at the age of seven or eight. It is the period of study and the whole attention of the student should be absorbed in study at the residence of his teacher (*gurukula*). *Brahman* is the *Veda* as the source of spiritual knowledge and so *brahmacarya* is the study of the *Veda*. The highest of all studies is Vedic study. The object of the study is to attain mastery over animal nature. The *Brahmacārin* has to lead a well-regulated life, practise self-control and observe celibacy. He should be moderate in his food, speech and conduct. He should beg his food and partake as much of it as his teacher prescribes for him. He should avoid excess of salt, acid and pungent substances. He should avoid meat and intoxicating drinks. He

should not use scents and flowers. He should not sleep in the daytime. He should not indulge in toilet. He should not drive in carts or coaches. He should not use footwear. He should shun objects that cause *kāma*, *krodha* and *lobha*. He should act with *viveka*. He should not indulge in music or dancing. He should not find fault with others and should not himself commit faults. He should regularly perform the *sandhyāvandana* or the worship of God in the Sun as the light of lights. A student is not required to pay for his studies. The *Guru* is maintained by the state and the tuition is free. He has to acquire knowledge and culture through service and devotion to his teacher. The most essential duty of the student is reverence to the teacher.

Then the student enters into the married life, the stage of his life called *gārhasthya*. He should select a fair and suitable bride of a different *gotra*. Marriage is a sacrament meant for spiritual life and not for sexual and sensual satisfaction and his partner should participate in his pursuit of *dharma*. Every man is a member of the social organism. He owes his body and mind or psycho-physical make-up to his forefathers, *ṛṣis* and gods and so he has to repay his debt of gratitude to them. The *Gṛhastha* has to do his duties and not assert his civic rights. The duty to the fore-fathers consists in the performance of *śrāddha* to

them and the continuance of the species worthy of the race. The duties of the *ṛṣis*, lie in the study of the *Vedas* as they are the Vedic seers of God. The Gods are pleased by Vedic sacrifices and worship. The first and the third can be accomplished only with the assistance of a wife. So marriage is a religious sacrament, according to our people and not a civil affair to satisfy our senses. Not only the above three functions, but also the remaining two of the *pañcayajñas* can be performed only with the assistance of a wife to look after the house. So our people assigned domestic work as the primary duty to the wife. It is also the duty of a *gṛhastha* or *householder* to feed all people who are in need of food, the *brahmacārin*, the other *gṛhasthas* who approach him for food, and the *sannyāsin* who has neither home nor relations, and even the *vānaprastha*. So every other *āśrama* depends upon the *gṛhasthāśrama* for its support as the children depend upon their mother. As a *Gṛhastha* has to offer *bhūta-bali* also, even the birds and insects derive support from him. So a *Gṛhastha* is the main stay of the society and his *āśrama* is the most humanitarian and therefore the best of the *āśramas*.

Pañca-yajñas are thus based on the idea of life as an opportunity for service and self-sacrifice and not for sense-enjoyment. It is giving back

to the universe what a man has taken from it for self-maintenance.

The next is the *vānaprasthāśrama.* When a man reaches old age and is subject to dotage and is blessed with a grandson, he should leave the *gṛhasthāśrama* and retire to the forest either with or without his wife, after transferring the management of the family to his son and spend his life in contemplation. Retirement to the forest is only for inner spiritual quiet. His food consists of roots, fruits and similar forest products. He practises ascetic self-control by fasts and enduring sufferings. He should also perform the five *mahāyajñas.* This *āśrama* is only a training period for the next or *sannyāsāśrama* or the life of renunciation and contemplation.

The *Sannyāsin* gives up all sense attractions and attachments and even the celestial pleasures of *Svarga.* Though he lives in solitude he may enter the city and seek alms for the sustenance of his body. He has no attachments or aversions. He returns love for hatred and lives for others. He is one with God and sees all things in God and God in all things. He is a veritable God on earth. This *āśrama* is the fruition of the other *āśramas* and the fulfilment of life. The life of dutifulness ends in the deified life; it is attitude that matters and not the detailed acts. As the *Gītā* says,

whatever a man's station in life, he can get freedom or *mukti* by doing his prescribed duty without attachment and absolute devotion to God.

Thus though the *āśramas* appear to be different stages in the spiritual development of man, starting with *brahmacarya* and ending with *sannyāsa*, it is held in a larger sense that each *āśrama* is an end in itself. A man can attain *mokṣa* by performing his prescribed duties well and without desiring any fruit in any *āśrama*. Purity of soul, detachment from worldly objects and absolute devotion to God will secure salvation to a man in any stage of life. There are relative duties due to birth, birthplace and social environment and these duties should not be inconsistent with obligatory or optional duties. Every duty is really a worship of the Deity who is the real actor or *kartā*. He is the act and the actor.

Now coming to the rights and duties of women, there is fundamental difference in our *śāstras* between *puruṣadharma* and *strīdharma*. Women are always dependent upon men and can never be independent. Women have their share of duties but they are not allowed to discharge them independently. Men too cannot practise *dharma* independently of women, but the difference is if a man begins to perform a rite, his wife has to co-operate and help him; a woman,

on the other hand, cannot undertake to do a work without the permission of her husband. If she does anything against the wishes of her husband, it will turn fruitless. The upshot of all this is that the primary duty of a wife is to follow the wishes of her husband (*pativratā*). According to our *śāstras* marriage is a sacrament (*saṁskāra*) and not a civil or social affair, and so the marital tie is unbreakable. A woman, once married, cannot desert her husband even if he were addicted to vices or devoid of good qualities. Conversely a man cannot abandon his wife and if he does so he is publicly censured. Husband and wife should be attached to each other for life, and love and be contended with each other.

Although independence has been denied to women in religious duties, she is the mistress of the house. All domestic duties are in her charge and she commands equal respect with her husband in the family—nay more. It is said that the father deserves hundred times more respect than the teacher and the mother thousand times more than the father. A man may abandon his father but he should, under no circumstances, abandon his mother. The wife also deserves equal respect because our *śāstras* say that a man is born in the form of his son through his wife. As he is born in his wife, she is called his *jāyā*. Where women are respected, there the Gods rejoice;

any rite becomes fruitless if it is done in a place where women are not repsected; a woman is the light of the house; she is prosperity incarnate; so says our *śāstra*.

As there are good deeds to be performed, so there are also bad deeds to be avoided. So the *śāstra* not only commands us to do certain duties but also prohibits us from commiting certain other acts. Just as the good deeds are calculated to produce merit, so the bad deeds or prohibited actions cause sin. Our seers were not only wise enough to lay down certain rules of conduct but were also prudent enough to warn us from doing wicked deeds. These deeds are either harmful to ourselves or to the society. One who does not want to lose his merit or acquire sin, should avoid them. A *Gṛhastha* should not covet another man's wife. No man should cause *himsā* or harm to another. A man of one caste should not encroach upon the duties of another caste, except in cases of dire necessity. One should not utter a lie. There are various prohibitions with regard to food. Generally food which is *rājasic* and *tāmasic* should be avoided. It should not excite the senses and animal instincts. It should not lead to slothfulness and apathy. Liquor and stealing are strictly prohibited.

When there are injunctions and prohibitions, it is natural that there should be omissions and

commissions, as to err is human. These have to be rectified and this is done by *prāyaścittas* or self-purifications. The underlying principle is repentance for lapses and sin. A man should feel repentance for what he has done and should benefit by experience. This is brought about by means of the *prāyaścittas.* The most common form of purification is penance and fasting or physical mortification leading to the purification of the soul. The derivative meaning of *prāyaś-citta* is penance and determination (not to repeat the act). These expiatory ceremonies purify the mind of the person and prevent his spirituality from being lowered by the omissions and commissions. The *prāyaścittas* are prescribed for slips or unintentional mistakes but not for wilful misdeeds or omissions. There is no atonement for wilful wickedness. The man is doomed for life. In our daily round of duties, we may unwittingly omit some details and we may not be aware of it. In order to ward off the evil effects of such omissions, it is usual to perform an act of atonement for them at the end of every ceremony. Our people are very scrupulous in the discharge of their duties and want to make sure of the merit of the actions. Remorse is vital to virtuous life.

Our system of fasts (*vratas*) and festivals are calculated to help us in self-purification and

development of the *sattva* character. If *sattva* increases, we will be free from egoism and resign ourselves to the will of God and attain salvation by His mercy. Fast reduces the force of the material body and enables the spiritual nature to attain ascendancy. Festivals are not simple feasts or dinners. They remind us of the advents of God on earth or commemorate the mighty deeds of God undertaken to purify the world by destroying the wicked and protecting the good, for the redemption of humanity. They are the outward expressions of our gratitude to God for His immense and constant mercy. If we do not express our gratitude to God, we will be guilty of ingratitude for the trouble that He has taken to make us approach Him. *Dīpāvalī*, for instance, is a day of rejoicing and remembrance of the good that Śrī Kṛṣṇa did to the world by killing the cruel demon, Naraka, on the previous day. *Saṅkrānti* commemorates the release of the world from the clutches of the demon Bali whom Viṣṇu drove away by His prowess. It also demonstrates the immense mercy of the Lord Who pardoned him in spite of his wickedness because he supplicated and who even took upon Himself the burden of protecting him so long as he lived. Another class of festivals is the celebration of the birthdays of the *avatāras* of God and of saints who have bequeathed to us their wisdom of the things of this world and the worlds beyond.

Note to Chapter VII

WOMANHOOD.

The home is the unit of Hindu society and the nursery of its ethical and spiritual life, and the Hindu woman is the pivot of the home, its source and sustenance. If man is the *gṛhastha* or the householder, woman is the *gṛhiṇī* or the owner or maker of the home. There can be no home without a wife or mother. She is the ministering angel of man and the very cradle of family life. Hinduism thus honours the woman as wife and mother as no other religion does.

Marriage is a sacrament and not a civil contract. It is not lust and the gratification of animal instinct but love that links the male and the female as *pati-patnị*. Wedlock brings out the spontaneity and reciprocity of love, its constancy and irrevocability and the value of spiritual partnership. The domestic life of the woman is not a drudgery but an inner delight arising from her ministering to the husband's needs and the upbringing of the children. As *sahadharmacāriṇī*, the wife, with her feminine sweetness and grace, co-operates with her husband in the maintenance of the family as the foundation of the corporate life of the community. She willingly shares the duties of the husband in the performance of his fivefold duties involving gratitude to the forefathers and hospitality to the poor and the needy. Her domestic life is not one of mere passivity and dependence due to feminine receptivity and responsiveness, but she is the queen or mistress of the home and its mainstay and prosperity or Lakṣmī incarnate. As *patnī*, she often leads the *pati* in sweetening his masterful will.

Her life of love is enriched by the advent motherhood. Her instinct of self-sacrifice and service are fully brought out in the bearing and rearing of the children, worthy of the *gotra* and the spiritual tradition. It is motherhood that elicits the infinite spirit of self-denial and affectionate solicitude and is manifested in the fostering of the child by endless privations and patience bordering on martyrdom. The forgiving nature of the mother increases with the prodigalities of the children even if they happen to be prodigal.

Wifehood is, therefore extolled in Hinduism as the symbol and embodiment of Divine Love. The *Īśvara-Īśvarī* relation of Godhood is a dual-nondual relation of *Pārvatī-Parameśvara* or *Śriyaḥpati. Īśvara* rules by Law and *Īśvarī* by love and the two are glued together as one. It is Divine Motherhood that is the operative grace of God which consists in forgiveness and the redemption of the sinner from his ways of wickedness. The mother's love is spontaneous and the Divine Mother forgives sins by Her overflowing love.

The love shown by the *pati* to the *patnī* is the real property of the woman and it is richer and more enduring than earthly property and material welfare. The work of the woman is not confined to the fostering of domestic felicity as she often takes a leading part in social service like feeding the poor, healing the sick and rearing children and rejoicing in devotional activities. But her feminine nature is essentially suited to the founding of the home and her fundamental right is the right of love which rules the home and society.

CHAPTER VIII

WORSHIP.

Ardent *bhakti* cannot rest satisfied with silent meditation and *upāsanā*, especially when it overflows and expresses itself in the form of tears, tremors and trance and as bridal mysticism. Vedic offerings to gods are reinterpreted as Vedāntic offerings to Brahman. Brahman is beyond space and time and is formless. But He has a formless form of His own to respond to the needs of the worshippers and their prayers and praise. Though *bhakti* is for *bhakti's* sake, the worshippers often pray for earthly and celestial boons and *Bhagavān*, as Providence, answers their prayers. Contemplation on the inner self is supremely desirable but it is not what is actually possible for the man of average common-sense. He wants something concrete to fix his mind upon. In His infinite mercy and love, God descends into humanity as *arcā* or idol. *Arcā* is not metal or stone symbol but is the permanent incarnation of God and the concretion of His *kṛpā*. In *arcā* God is easily accessible to all at any time or in any place. God-hunger for man is more than man's hunger for God and as *arcā*. He longs for communion with the devotee whom He regards as His very *ātman*

or self. *Bhakti* and worship or *pūjā* are the inner and the outer expressions of man's love of God. In His infinite love, He comes down and the mystic ascends to Him by *Karma Yoga*, *Jñāna Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga*. *Arcā* is the most accessible form of God for expressing our love through *pūjā* or worship.

Worship can be offered in a variety of ways. We can worship Him by inner meditation or *dhyāna*. We can again worship Him by offering flowers, incense, food and drink. We can also worship Him by simply uttering His names. The first method is difficult to practise as it implies the turning of the vision inward. The second is easy and lies within the reach of all people. The third is the easiest and the most efficacious of all. The worship of the idol or *arcā* is really the worship of the living all-pervading presence of the Lord. The deity responds to our *bhakti* and out of His grace, reveals His nature in and as *arcā*. While *avatāras* are historic incarnations of God that come and go, *arcā* is the permanent incarnation of God and He is ever accessible to the mystic. God comes to stay in the idol out of His grace and by virtue of our devotion and prayer.

There are two primary methods in the worship of God as Nārāyaṇa, namely, the *Pāñca-*

rātra and the *Vaikhānasa.* The *Pāñcarātra Āgama* is the word of Nārāyaṇa Himself and it is a *sāttvika* religion based on the practice of lȍve. The *Vaikhānasa* is also of divine origin. The *Śaiva Āgamas* are traced to Śiva. The *Āgamas*, therefore, claim the same validity as the *Itihāsas* and the *Purāṇas.*

Worship of God as *arcā* or image is of two kinds, namely, temple and domestic worship. The former is meant for all and has continuity. It is conducive to the good of the community as a whole. Domestic worship is, however, confined to the householder and his family. Again, there will be *homa, bali* and *utsava* in temple worship which are absent in domestic worship. Further there will be multiple images in temples worship.

The *Āgamas* refer to 96 varieties of temples of which 18 are prescribed for Viṣṇu and the remaining types are meant for other Gods. The essential parts of a temple are the *garbhagṛha* or the *sanctum sanctorum,* the *mukha maṇṭapa* or the pavilion in front and the *prākāra* or the walls surrounding the *sanctum* for going round it or *pradakṣiṇa.* The *garbhagṛha* is surmounted by a *vimāna* or tower and the *prākāra* is provided with a gate or *gopura.* The *prākāras* may vary from one to seven according to the grandeur of the temple.

Five kinds of images are prescribed for temple worship of which *dhruva*, the static aspect, and *utsava*, the dynamic aspect, are the most important. The images are of three types, *viz*., the *sthānaka* or the standing posture, the *āsana* or the sitting posture and the *śayana* or the lying down posture. Each of these kinds may be of the *yoga* or the serene type, the *bhoga* or the blissful and the *vīra* or the heroic.

The *Āgamas* furnish detailed instructions regarding the planning and construction of temples as regards position, size and the measurements of the *vimāna* and other parts of the temple. Just as the body is a living temple of God and the heart is His shrine, so the town is modelled on a spiritual plan with the temple at the centre. In addition to the temple to the *ādimūrti* or the chief God there may be temples for the other incarnations of God, the Āḷvārs, Nāyanmārs and the Ācāryas. The whole temple is pervaded by a religious atmosphere in which work is elevated into worship and worship is raised to the philosophical and spiritual level.

The festivals conducted in a temple are for the benefit of the community as a whole and they are of two kinds, the periodic and the occasional. While the devotee seeks the *mūlavar* or the God within, the *utsavar*, as the giver of grace, seeks

the devotees outside and bestows His blessings on them. In addition to the periodic festivals, like those at the time of the full moon or the equinoxes, festivals may be performed at any time out of devotion or desire to ward off evils in times of drought or cosmic calamities. The duration of the festivals may vary from one to 15 or 30 days. A flag is hoisted in the temples to indicate the course of the festival; and it is lowered at the end of the same. Once the flag is hoisted, none may leave the town until it is lowered. This indicates that the festival is for the benefit of the people. It is laid down that devotional festivals should be performed in the afternoon.

Great care is taken for maintaining the purity or security of the temple. God is pure and perfect. Expiatory ceremonies are prescribed for the slightest act of impurity. The underlying idea is that God who is essentially pure and free from all kinds of taints, withdraws His presence from places polluted in the slightest degree as unfit for His stay. The devotee should go into it with pure body and mind. Cleanliness leads to godliness and only the pure in heart can reach God. Certain ceremonies are performed to purify the atmosphere of the temple if it is made impure. Expiatory ceremonies are prescribed for the entry of impure persons and animals into the temple.

Even the appearance of fungus and anthills inside the temple is considered to be a fit occasion for expiation. Expiatory ceremonies are also described for portents which forestall evil to the country.

Bhārata Deśa is the birth place of universal religion and is the holy land of the *avatāras*, Ṛṣis, Āḷvārs, Nāyanmārs, Ācāryas and other seers of God. The birth place of *avatāras* and godly men is called a *kṣetra* or sacred place sanctified by their advent in the interests of spiritualising humanity. Mother India has infinite capacity to produce godly men and is therefore worshipped as perpetually young though she has given birth to a countless number of sages and saints through the ages. The Vedāntins seek Brahman as the supreme Deity or *sat* or as the cosmic Lord or *Īśvara;* the mystics seek Him as the indwelling Self but all religious people adore the *avatāra*, historical or permanent, in the *kṣetras* of which seven are said to be the chief. Ayodhyā is the birth place of Śrī Rāma; Mathurā, Gokula and Bṛndāvana are associated with the *līlā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Kāśi is the heart of spiritual India. Kāñcī is held sacred as the chief salvation giving city of India.

Arcā is worshipped in five forms of which the most important is *svayaṁvyakta* like Tirupati.

The Lord in His infinite mercy incarnates here and is the very embodiment of redemptive love for all *jīvas*. He summons all *jīvas* from the hill-top to seek His feet and attain His grace. Other *kṣetras* are Srirangam, Puskaram, Melkote and Naimisam. Kanci is a *divyakṣetra* to Varada consecrated by Brahma. Trivellore is an *ārṣa kṣetra* consecrated by a *Ṛṣi*. A *mānuṣa kṣetra* is established by a good man. Temples whose origin is not thus known are called *purāṇa kṣetras* and most temples come under this heading. *Śaiva kṣetras* also conform to type and Śiva dwells as the five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether of which the most important is Chidambaram, permeated by *cit*. The pilgrim's progress, external but symbolical to the Vaiṣṇavites and the Śaivites, is from Badarināth and Kedāranāth in the north, to Kāśīnāth, Mathurānāth and Ayodhyānāth in the centre, to Paṇḍarīnāth and Dvārakānāth in the west, to Jagannāth in the east and to Venkaṭanāth, Kāñcīnāth, Raṅganāth and Rāmanāth in the south. The pilgrim then enters into the inner shrine and ascends to eternity.

Tīrthas are tanks or rivers, the waters of which are considered to be holy on account of their association with some holy place or saint. Physical cleanliness is next to spiritual purity and godliness. Every *kṣetra* has a *tīrtha* attached

to it, a bath in which is said to cleanse our sins. Our *Śrīnivāsa kṣetra* has in it *Svāmipuṣkariṇī*. All should bathe in it and purify themselves before approaching the presenee of God. The Gaṅgā is holy because it is said to have deseended from Heaven and issued out of the feet of Viṣṇu. It was brought down by the severe penance of King Bhagīratha to remove the sins of the ten thousand sons of Sagara and send them to Heaven. The Godāvarī and the Kāverī are equally sacred.

Pilgrimages to holy places are symbolic of the pilgrimage of the soul to God. The end and aim of our life is the pilgrimage of the soul to God, the home of all eternal values like truth, goodness and beauty. Pilgrimages to *kṣetras* enable the devotee to shed his prejudice due to the accidents of birth and station and long for His soul-sight. He attains *vairāgya* or the virtue of self-renouncement by minimising his wants and acquiring *sāttvic* endurance and patience. Contact with holy men fosters the spirit of human kinship and the kinship of souls leading to spiritual service. The great Āḷvārs, Nāyanmārs and Ācāryās, therefore, took to pilgrimage from the Himālayas to the Setu to promote devotion in themselves and others.

CHAPTER IX

SĀDHANAS.

The *puruṣārthas* or chief ends of life outlined in the next chapter have a religious value. *Dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* are not ends in themselves; they lead to the supreme end called *mokṣa puruṣārtha*. *Mokṣa* is freedom from *avidyā* and *karma* which bind the *ātman* to the world of *saṁsāra*. The *ātman* really belongs to God but somehow he has identified himself with the body made of twenty-four *tattvas* of *prakṛti* from time immemorial. Owing to this materialistic view he is subject to the changes of *prakṛti* and therefore to the cycle of births and deaths, pleasures and pains. At long last he comes to know that he has given up his permanent home in God, banished himself from God, became a wanderer in *saṁsāra* and therefore he longs to return to his home. God as the self and the saviour of souls also longs for reunion. It is in this light that the teaching of the *Gītā* as the book of yogic *sādhanas* is to be understood. Yoga is union with God and each yoga stresses this union. The chief yogas are *Karma yoga*, *Rāja yoga*, *Jñāna yoga* and *Bhakti yoga* including *Prapatti*. They are generally arranged as steps in a ladder and every sect or system has its own

way of attainment. There is another view that each yoga is independent and leads directly to *mukti*. In this work, the view of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism is adopted and *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* are treated as different stages in the pilgrimage to God. The will is first disciplined, then thought and finally feeling as *bhakti* is stressed. *Prapatti* is the easiest way to God as He Himself becomes the way and the end and *mukti* is thus attained by the grace of God.

Karma yoga is a moral discipline by purifying the will. Its object is to change *kāmya karma* into *niṣkāma karma* or duty for duty's sake. No man can be without doing *karma* and *karma* includes thought, speech and overt action. Every man as a bodily self ordinarily follows his animal inclination or desire for sense-objects. He not only seeks sense-pleasures but also desires some outside ends like success (*jaya*), profit (*lābha* and name and fame. These are called *kāmya karmas* because they are based on the desire of the person for sense-objects and sense-pleasures. Such ends are not desirable morally as they make the person the slave of sensibility. Besides, *kāmā* leads to *krodha* or anger when the desire is not achieved; anger leads to confusion and moral death. Therefore, the *Gītā* prescribes the way of *niṣkāma karma* as the way of moral life. *Karma* is done because it is impossible to be without doing

it. But it ought to be done without caring for the fruits or consequences, as *niṣkāma karma*. It is duty for duty's sake. Then the *karma yogin* is not a slave of the senses, but is a victor thereof. Every man has a station in life and some duties pertaining to it. He ought to do them as duties irrespective of the consequences. He may succeed or fail, derive pleasure or suffer from pain; he should not care for them.

Karma has three meanings. In the scientific sense, every *karma* is an effect and it follows from a cause or set of causes. It also determines the future action. In this way it becomes a continuous series; and he theory may lead to fatalism. No man can escape his past and he is the slave of destiny. In a higher or moral sense, *karma* is the action of a *kartā* and the *kartā* is morally free; he has the will to shape his future, according to his conviction. But when once the action is done, he cannot escape its consequences. What a man sows, that he reaps and the moral law of retribution works with mathematical precision. Good deeds are never lost, so also bad deeds, and it is the deeds that determine a man's character. But if *karma* is done by him as *niṣkāma karma*, he is free as he does not care for the fruits. The law of *kāmya karma* does not bind him. Virtue is its own reward; it has its own intrinsic values and character shines

by itself. In a still higher sense, namely, the religious sense, every *karma* is the worship of God and then *karma* is done as *kaiṅkarya* or work dedicated to Him. The *karmayogin* now says: "Not I, but Thou, oh Lord" and does his work as worship of God, "*sarvam kṛṣṇārpaṇam.*" *Īśvara* is the real *kartā* or actor in individual and social life. No doubt, the body, the senses, the mind and the soul more than all contribute to *karma.* But *Īśvara* is the ultimate agent and is the means and the end. In this sense, *karma yoga* is a direct way to *mukti*, but it is developed only in the final stage of religious life.

Rāja Yoga is mind-control (*cittavṛtti nirodha*) and is a royal path to Brahman or God. The mind is ordinarily fleeting and frittered and it is the aim of the *yoga* to collect it and centre it in God. It is therefore a psychological method as different from the moral method of *karma yoga*. This *yoga* consists of eight stages, namely, *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyama*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. Purity of body and mind are essential to the practice of this *yoga*. The first four stages refer to the cleansing of the body and breath--control. The next four stages refer to mind-control. At last, the mind expands, attains *samādhi* and *śānti* or peace. This expansion is explained in two ways both physically and mentally. It is the ascent of

spiritual energy in the centres of the body from *mūlādhāra* in the lowest part of the spinal cord to *Sahasrāra* in the brain. From the mental point of view there is expansion of consciousness from the lowest stage to the highest state. There is expansion from the unconscious to the sub-conscious and the conscious to the super-conscious state of *samādhi*. The Yogin can acquire *siddhis* or miraculous powers like entering into the bodies of others and acquiring control over nature. But such *siddhis* are real obstacles to spiritual life and union with God, and they should therefore be given up. The chief value of this *yoga* is that it teaches us the way to self-knowledge and self-sovereignty.

Jñāna yoga is the philosophic method of enquiry into the nature of the *Ātman* and its relation to Brahman. It is not merely an intellectual but also a spiritual enquiry based on *viveka*, *vairāgya* and *abhyāsa*. By means of *viveka*, the *yogin* or philosopher distinguishes between the *ātman* that is eternal and the bodily self that is fleeting. By *vairāgya* he renounces the false feeling that he is the body and tries to give up egoity or *ahaṅkāra*. *Abhyāsa* consists in the practice of contemplation on the *ātman*. At last he attains *ātmajñāna* or self-realisation; he attains *śānti*. But such *jñāna* is only a stage and not a stopping place. It should lead to *Brahmajñāna*

or God-realisation. Advaita gives a different meaning to *jñāna yoga* and gives it the highest place among the *yogas*. It says that the *jīva* and *Īśvara* are identical and the consciousness of this identity is *jñāna*. But in the religious path, *bhakti* is higher than *jñāna*.

Bhakti yoga is the practice of devotion to God or *Bhagavān*. God is super-personal and not impersonal or *nirguṇa* or *arūpa*. As Rāmānuja says in the beginning of his *Śrī Bhāṣya* to the *Brahma Sūtras*, Brahman is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe and His rulership is a *līlā* of love for saving souls. The Brahman of the *Upaniṣads* is Lord Śrīnivāsa who is divinity as *dayā*. The practice of *bhakti* according to him consists of seven stages, namely, *viveka*, *vimoka*, *abhyāsa*, *kriyā*, *kalyāṇa*, *anavasāda* and *anuddharṣa*. Briefly explained, they consist in taking *sāttvic* food, giving up desires for the objects of the senses, practice of the presence of God, performance of the duties as ordained in *Śāstra*, practice of virtues like truth and hospitality and freedom from the extreme feelings of elation and depression. The *bhakta* is initiated by the *guru* into *upāsanā* or meditation on Brahman as Śriyaḥpati or Lord and Śrī in the light of the *mūlamantras*. *Bhakti* then becomes intense as *paramabhakti* and it becomes a thirst for divine union as in the case of Nammāḷvār. The *bhakta*

may be a servant of God or *dāsa* like Hanumān, a friend of God like Arjuna; he may cherish motherly love as Yaśodā or Periāḷvār did for the divine child Kṛṣṇa, or may yearn for love like a *nāyakī* for her Lord as Āṇḍāl did.

Bhakti yoga is Love lit by *jñāna* and a rigorous path which only the twice-born can follow. An easier method is adopted by Śrī Vaiṣṇavism and it is called *prapatti*. *Bhagavān* is Śriyaḥpati, the Lord of redemptive grace. He has incarnated as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and is *sarvalokaśaraṇya*, the redeemer of all *jīvas*. He is *rakṣaka* or *śaraṇya* as taught in the classic text of *prapatti* " Renounce all *dharmas* and take refuge at My feet. I will release you from all sins." Six conditions are laid down for *prapattiyoga*. The *yoga* consists on the whole in deathless faith in the saving grace of God and absolute surrender to Him in a spirit of contrition and humility and inner purity. Grace is said to be got by him whom God chooses as self surrender is not of the nature of a cause. Whatever it is, *prapatti* is for all irrespective of caste, creed, sex or profession and is therefore universal. The chief *mantra* for *prapatti* is *dvaya* which means refuge at the feet of Lord and Srī. The classic example of *prapatti* is that of Nammāḷvār, the super-*prapanna* of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism who surrendered himself to the mercy of Śrīnivāsa with Śrī as

His Heart, and was blessed with *mukti*. All sects in India are, as it were, pilgrims to the Divine *dayā* in the holy Hill of Tirumalai. The Hill is sacred to the followers of Madhva who insist on service to Viṣṇu as the chief means and end of religion.

The Śaivite defines Śiva, his supreme God, as Love and refers to four ways, *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna* as means to the attainment of Śiva. They correspond to the four *yogas* of Vedānta. Even the followers of Śaṅkara accept the existence of a Personal God for all practical purposes and the need for His grace. Thus all Hindus have faith in Brahman as personal God and seek with the aid of a *guru* His mercy to attain *mokṣa* or *sāyujya* which is outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X

PURUSĀRTHAS.

Every animal pursues an end but man alone is conscious of the end. Man has reason or *viveka* and he is also morally free and a *kartā*. His consciousness of the end or purpose is called *puruṣārtha;* it is his aim of life or goal. Man's physical needs are food, water, fire, air and clothing, *i.e.*, they are for the preservation of his body. He seeks pleasures and their continuance and avoids pains. Hinduism has analysed all the chief ends of life and classified them into four broad kinds. They are called *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. They may be rendered in English as the ethical, the economic,the hedonistic or pleasure-seeking and the religious ends of life. They are not, however, exclusive. They all lead to the super-end of life, namely, *mokṣa*.

Dharma or righteousness is the ethical end of life. Hinduism gives the practice of *dharma* the first place among the *puruṣārthas* as no man can take a moral holiday. Right conduct is the whole of life and the other ends of life should also be righteous. Buddhism and Jainism also insist on the need for the practice of *dharma*. But they do not recognise and realise that good-

ness has its final meaning only in godliness. God is good by nature and the highest good is godliness, to be attained through the *Śāstra*. So morality or *dharma* has its full meaning in religion or *Śāstra* which prescribes the duties that ought to be done. They are called *vidhis*. They are righteousness in practised acts. *Dharma* is righteousness in action and is the essence of duty and it consists in reverence to parents, teachers and sages; truthfulness, charity, courage and kindliness to all creatures. It includes the performance of the five *yajñas* or sacrifices to the *devas* and *pitṛs* above, to men and lower animals. It brings out the solidarity of the universe and the need for mutual helpfulness. The violation of these duties is *adharma* and entails sin or *pāpa*. *Adharma* includes evil and sin; it is evil in the moral sense and sin in the religious sense as it is the violation of a Divine Law. By doing the acts of *dharma*, the general attitude of *dharma* or righteousness is attained. A man then becomes a *dharmavān* like Dharmaputra and is like Rāma, the very incarnation of righteousness on earth. Śrī Rāma practised truthfulness (*satya*), devotion to vows, kindliness to all creatures and self-control. He subordinated *artha* and *kāma* to the discipline of *dharma*. *Dharma* is thus the very essence of duty for duty's sake.

Artha is an end of life which is both desired and desirable. A student who finishes his studies or academic life should enter on the life of a householder or *gṛhastha*. He ekes out his livelihood by doing hard and honest work for the maintenance of his family and others. Wealth is not an end in itself and the miser who hoards his wealth for the sake of wealth is rightly condemned as an *adharmavān* and anti-social. The householder should be hospitable, helpful to the needy and do his duty to the *devas* and *pitṛs* as the whole world is one. There is really no difference between individual and secular or *laukika* duties and special or spiritual or *vaidika* duties as every duty is finally an offering to the deity. *Karmas* are of three kinds, *viz.*, *nitya karmas* or daily duties like *sandhyā*, *naimittika karmas* or occasioned duties like ceremonies to *pitṛs* and *kāmya karmas* or optional works. While the first two are obligatory, the third is optional.

Kāma is the attainment of the pleasures of life and is the third *puruṣārtha*. When a man desires children, health or wealth, he does certain *karmas* or *yajñas* to please the *devas* and gets the desired boons. People pray to God for boons and He grants their prayers. *Kāmya karmas* are on the whole for enjoying the pleasures of life here and in Svarga. But they are trivial and transient. Therefore a wise

man should renounce these pleasures and seek eternal happiness which is only in *mokṣa*.

Kaiṅkarya or social and spiritual service to all *jīvas* is work raised to the level of worship of God. The great devotees of God like the Āḻvārs and the Ācāryas sought God in all beings and all beings in God and raised the idea of service to the level of *kaiṅkarya*. Self-surrender to God is the highest *puruṣārtha* or supreme end of conduct. God is the fulfilment of all the *puruṣārthas*, as He is *sarvakāma* or all-desire and *sarvaśaraṇya*, the refuge of all.

The *mumukṣu* who seeks *mukti* by following *sādhanas* or yogas at last attains it. The term *mokṣa* means freedom from *saṁsāra* or the ills of life due to *avidyā* and *karma*. It is freedom from the cycle of births and deaths to which the embodied *jīva*, or *baddha* as he is called, is subject. The word *mukti* is negative as it means that there is no return to this world of *saṁsāra*. But it has also a positive meaning as it refers to the ascent of the freed *jīva* to the world of Brahman beyond space and time. *Mokṣa* is the attainment of Brahman by knowing whom everything is known. According to Rāmānuja, following the *Upaniṣads*, the *Sūtras* and the *Gītā*, the *mukta* freed from the body, ascends gloriously by the *arcirādi* path or *devayāna*, led by a Divine guide to

Vaikuṇṭha beyond this world and the world of the *devas*. When the body dies, the *mumukṣu* has a glimpse of the *Brahmanāḍī*. This *nāḍī* throws light on the path and he soars gloriously to Vaikuṇṭha, through the shining regions of Indra, Sūrya and other Devas, crosses the river Virajā and goes beyond. He is freed from *avidyā* and *karma* and the subtle body by bathing in the purifying waters of Virajā. Then he reaches Vaikuṇṭha, sees Brahman face to face, attains union with Him and enjoys eternal bliss. Though the language used by the *Upaniṣad* in this ascent and attainment is the earthly language of space, time and sensibility, it is really beyond human description. Vaikuṇṭha is beyond space and time, mind and body and Brahman has a formless form, is eternal, ever self-shining and blissful. The *mukta* becomes one with Him and is immortal and ever blissful. He no longer returns to this world of *karma* and is no longer bound by *prakṛti* or *kāla*. In the state of bliss he is one with Brahman though he exists as a distinct entity. The *muktas* are spiritually united and as they are free, their desires are at once fulfilled. They may serve the Lord without any taint of egoity and serve each other and fulfil the redeeming purpose of the Lord who longs to make the other bound *jīvas muktas*. On the whole it is impossible to describe the bliss of Vaikuṇṭha.

He who experiences it alone can explain it. The followers of Madhva separate good from evil and assert that the good *jīva* or devotee of Viṣṇu goes to Vaikuṇṭha and serves Him there for ever and that the wicked is hurled into everlasting Hell. The Śaivite has faith in Śiva as the supreme good and by following the saint's path, he attains, after death, the world of Śiva or Kailāsa. The Advaitin says that *mukti* is possible even in this life and it is *jīvanmukti* or identity of *jīva* and *Īśvara*. He, however, admits gradual release by ascending to the world of Viṣṇu.

All Hindus have faith in the four yogas and freedom from *saṁsāra* with the grace of God.

CHAPTER XI

RELIGION AND SOCIETY.

Man is a social creature as well as an individual seeker. He is therefore a person who seeks the four *puruṣārthas* as an individual, and as a social creature he participates in the strivings of all the rest of the community. He has social ties which he cannot shake off. There are natural instincts of social acitivity such as co-operation and working for group unity and welfare. Hinduism recognizes both the individual and the social aspects of each person within the community even as it recognizes the physical and the material and the spiritual aspects of every individual. Just as his efforts are to be for the realisation of himself as spiritual, so also his social activities must be directed towards his realisation of unity or brotherhood with all the members of the community.

Hinduism is most catholic. Its one-pointed effort has always been towards the realisation of social unity amid differences. Through its formulation of the metaphysical principle of one *Īśvara* who is worshipped in different forms and names, it had kept up the ideal of religion as the realisation in the life of each of its members

of the *Īśvara* so as to create a common or one Humanity. Hinduism does not appeal merely to the heart or to the head but to something more valuable. It appeals to the soul, the spiritual nature in each individual. It appeals to the godhead concealed in the heart of every creature. It teaches the Life Divine, which is the dwelling in God and for God in His world. This is the goal of Hinduism. This promises for each individual the triple aims of the spiritual life, a life of liberty, a life of righteousness or law, and a life of love for all creation that verily belongs to God.

Hinduism is a supreme socialising and divinising force. It is not anti-social or unsocial like some religions. It has meaning for man here in this world. It treats the world as a great field of God's play in which all individuals must take part and act with understanding according to rules or *dharma* prescribed in the play to each part.

The Hindu religion has carefully analysed the structure of society, its divisions of functions and periods of maturation, growth, development, and ripening of each individual. In other words, its division of castes depends upon the functions and its division of *āśramas* depends upon the stages of man in a society. It is true that these

are given a fuller and profounder significance in some cases, though it is a fact that these divisions cannot be treated to be water tight compartments. Pure types and pure functions are difficult to find in any society. The individual in religion discovers a new set of values for the terms liberty, law and love, (*mokṣa*, *dharma* and *kāma*), meanings which are impossible to get in the purely political society. A society composed as it is of various degrees of intelligence and capacity and personality, does not grasp the full significance of this discovery of religious consciousness. None the less, religion does help to integrate or unify the triple goals of liberty, law and love. To the lower nature these mean license, power and lust for things. But sublimated by Religion they become wonderful expressions of the nature of the soul or spirit.

The social life of man becomes transfigured and civilised by the sublimated direction given to all the activities of the ordinary man. The teachings and the practices of the masters of Hinduism are directed to the civilising of man, by taming his lower nature which revels in egoism and competition, jealousy and greed, violence and hatred. Religion being a higher power or force of the new dimension of the personal and social life seeks mastery over the past vital life of man. In Hinduism it is sought in full conformity with the triple principles of liberty, law

and love. That it has not been successful in Hinduism in a larger measure than we would like it to be only shows that generally there has been a stepping down of the ideals of religion everywhere. Religions become rigid and tend to repeat the mistakes of passion and greed of the lower levels on the higher levels of social and spiritual action and thus step down the force of the true impulse.

Hinduism unlike other religions which took up the competitive path, has sought to tame even the enthusiasm of the knowers of other religions by its wide catholicity in spirit to the truths expounded by them. It has disarmed them all, both within India and without by means of its peaceful approach. The twin-notes of Hinduism, struck not once only in the history of India, are peace (*Śānti*) and knowledge (*Jñāna*), peace through knowledge and knowledge through peace. A social life which is based on these two principles or ideals, would tend to exhibit a higher state of civilisedness and culture than one based on comfort or security or even salvation.

The individual must be re-made in the spiritual manner. This requires on the part of every individual the recognition of the world as a divine world, a world not based on chance or chaos but a cosmos. A lawful world is the ideal

of a rational creature. As we have seen *dharma* is the conception of the law behind the world and all actions or *karmas* which are performed properly and selflessly and without seeking fruits are individually emancipating and socially good. Good performance of actions or *karma yoga* itself leads to *Brahmānubhava* or God-experience. By moral action Hinduism means all such actions as are done without seeking fruits and according to *dharma* laid down by tradition, spiritual insight and great seers. Such actions have the characteristic of social good, because the socially evil actions are mostly self-seeking and egoistic actions. It is true that Hinduism also pleads for the performance of actions which are neither personally good nor socially good, neither personally evil nor socially evil but only actions which have the sanction of God (*dharma*), for human individuals and societies have not yet arrived at a knowledge of what is their good or evil. It is above their comprehension. Faith in the *śāstras* alone matters in duty, for it leads to the transcendental good which is ultimately both personal and social good.

The political life of a people reflects the moral and social qualities of its members. A society in the full sense of the term is a political society with its State and other organisations which ensure freedom for the members and rights of

each. In modern times the State has taken over the organisations which have to cater to the needs of the members. Socialisation and Nationalisation of the organisations which have previously been run by individuals is not a little due to the awakening of men to their social and spiritual needs of liberty and rights and duties. This awakening is really due to the religious teachings of great men, who had taught reverence for life and rights of each member. It is religion in India that taught the triple truths of liberty of the individual as a goal, of law which is administered equally, that is, in the interests of the poor and the rich alike, the high and the low, and love for all, love which is expressed by acts of kindness and protection, in times of disease and distress, famine and drought.

The grand truths of religions alone inspired the great work of social amelioration of the conditions of life. The social dynamics of modern States is inspired, whether in a materialistic or socialistic State, by the spiritual principles of *dharma*, *mokṣa* and *kāma*, law, liberty and love, and *karuṇā* or sympathy. The practical idealism of religion in Hinduism would extend this to the animals also. Humanitarianism extends to animals also which form part of the economy of the State. The aim of true religion as Hinduism, is to make individuals who would

in all their secular activities or even in secular matters bring to bear the triple principles or apply them as standard to conduct. Similarly to apply these principles to social or political legislation is the natural extension of *rāja-dharma* *Rāja-dharma* must improve and make possible the *svadharma* of its members. It may correct and quicken the pace of transformation of the lower and selfish qualities by socialising man and bring the restraints of law to bear on the unlawful or otherwise not-real nature of the individuals. But it ultimately exists for the realisation of real *mokṣa* and *svārājya.*

The modern State endeavours to fulfil all the functions of Religion because it has taken over the ideals of religion as its own ends. But while it may help the conditions for the growth and happiness of all its members, while it may give them a sense of freedom from want and restrain in matters particularly physical and social, it cannot compel men to be good except on pain of punishment. It can instil fear and by this threat many members are likely to be restrained from doing unsocial activities. There is however a great danger in this development. Force hinders rather than helps self-growth. A state taking over the functions of the spiritual evolution may defeat it. Instead of being a hindrance to hindrances it may tend to become a great hindrance.

Religion is helpful positively and not merely negatively. It makes for a change of heart. Men of religion are sought after for the solution of personal problems, which are not capable of being attended to by psychiatrists and doctors of medicine. Human problems go beyond the temporary, social and personal life. Peace is sought after and spiritual men who have found peace within and comprehended the truths of both the here and the hereafter help to secure peace within. Man is more than a social and physiological creature. His problems of death and life baffle the intellect and no state or its organisations can help to solve these problems. Religion alone promises to solve them and it does it in its own unique way. These problems are not social problems except indirectly. The State must know its limitations in this direction. Any state that attempts to dismiss the connection of these fundamental problems which harass the souls of its members by edicts of the kind that have been issued in countries dominated by purely national, socialistic or materialistic ideologies, is bound in the long run to break up the State itself. The State or even Society cannot become God or the sole object of loyalty because it cannot satisfy the deepest impulse of the soul for the knowledge of itself completely. Real *mokṣa* is sought after and it means not liberty for getting goods and

satisfactions or the liberty before the eye of law and right to equal opportunity but the liberty to be freed from the cycle of births and deaths, and the terror of constant birth and death.

Religion supplies this and it alone can supply this. Spiritual pain is verily different from all other kinds of pain and fear. It cannot be assuaged by any offer of worldly wealth, or divine pleasures of even the rigid life of *dharma*. Great men have thrown away empires for the sake of freedom from all these. The *artha* and *kāma puruṣārthas* are *tuccha*. A world dominated by them is a delusion, a snare. . Man should seek to get out of them, free himself from them. But such a freedom is difficult without the opening of the soul to real light. Teachers of religion know how to help these men. The preservation of religious texts and institutions facilitates the seeker of liberation on his path. Inner illumination or desire needs the support of the religious literature and methods. The company of the good or knowers of the path of inner discovery shower peace and prepare the conditions for one's own growth. Freedom becomes meaningless to a soul that has need of solace and peace. This peace is granted by God and one feels free in His presence freed from the pains and struggles and conflicts of his personality and community. Temples and Maths offer this atmosphere, but

then these must have men who have devoted themselves and are devoting themselves to their self-discovery and God-realisation. Love or sympathy pervades the atmosphere of the *āśramas*, the retreats of the good men of spirit. These too serve mankind. Though a *Yogin* or religious man is one who retires from the world, yet does he serve those who need his company by his very peace, the inward peace which no State can ensure for him. Hinduism realises that all types of men should have freedom for this realisation. It does not believe in one universal panacea for all diseases of the body and brain and heart or soul. The religious man or spiritual saint and mystic is an important person, who, though not of the world lives and moves and has his being in God, casts peace on all mankind, gives to those who can listen the nectar of spiritual peace, and a sanctuary for the haunted soul, afraid and sorrowing. Love begins to be available to all whoever feels that the world is a terrible place to live in. He shows the new way of transformation of a world diseased. Wherever he is, because of his universal nature, he begins to inspire all with faith and love and hope.

The spiritual activities which are the special province of Religion and religious associations can never be taken over by the State as part of its general functions. A secular State or a welfare

State may seek to distribute equitably the goods of the world on the principle of greatest happiness of the greatest number. The qualitative distinction of the spiritual good can indeed never become part of the quantitative goods of the social and economic or hedonistic order (*artha* and *kāma*). It is true in these spheres the right distribution which is equitable distribution between all the members of the world society or nation is the legitimate method. Equitableness of the distribution of the goods however, is only part of the right or *dharma* with which a State is charged. There are and have been other criteria of rightness than equitableness of distribution. Freedom can never be distributed though security can perhaps be. Even a theocratic state (such as Pakistan in modern times) cannot but create conditions of freedom or growth to happen in a particular manner. But in attempting this there happens the socialisation of the religious consciousness which is not always an unmixed good. But it helps the awareness of the need for greater and greater enlightenment in matters pertaining to personal liberty. An ordered or self-disciplined liberty is the aim of liberty, or else *mokṣa* would become meaningless. There is in every soul an elemental need for the inner discovery of God which has most often been achieved in spite of outside social action and society. This

need is other than the peace, the comfort and the security that man gets out of the socialisation of human action. There is great truth in the dictum that the individual is greater than the society to which he belongs, though he is inseparable from it. But he belongs to something greater than humanity itself, namely to God, for the goal of man is the eternal and the immortal sense of existence which nothing less than God can grant. God is the Ultimate goal, transcendent to the goals of the world and the State, and all others have meaning and value only in relation to Him.

The ideal of a secular State does not mean that the state is to be or ought to become anti-religious. It is the affirmation of the principle that the State does not seek to take over the functions of religion, organized or unorganized, institutionalised or non-institutionalised. This does not mean that the State permits the religious institutions to do what they please. In those activities which interfere with the sound canons of social life and peace, the State is the authority; in matters of proper administration of religious institutions even the State holds itself free to legislate within the limits of its competence, though this is a difficult pose.

The one truth that we learn from religion and philosophy is that though we can distinguish aspects in human behaviour and can even investigate those aspects and form different sciences, we can never separate them. They are organic to each other. There are people or rather scientists who discovered the economic man, the political man, the religious man, the aesthetic man and so on. On the basis of this, sciences such as economics, sociology, political science, religious science and aesthetics have come into being; very useful within limits, they always tend to apply their laws or hypotheses beyond limits as if man was exhausted by each one of them. This has led in modern times to very lopsided developments. Man has been forgotten by the sciences. Man is more than all that the different sciences have made of him. These several aspects are properties of man's rationality, that quality or *dharma* or *guṇa*, which realises itself in the several activities in which he engages. Thus the organization of this personality is the aim of his own life, but it is not possible through any particular mechanism of any social order or the State. The State should remember that the individual is more than the sum of his social and economic and legal life. Religion also should remember that its serious purpose is the discovery of the inward reality in each individual which it must help by giving it

freedom and flexibility and the environment necessary for such a great thing as individual realisation, which is also the fulfilment of the society of which he continues to be a member. The State must protect the sanctity of the environments of those who have out of their own will chosen the path of discovery of the self and help them to go on, even as it has striven to keep the theoretical and investigating scientists free from the common gaze. The realisations of saints would not be, as the past history of culture has shown, less influential and beneficent than the contributions of scientists to society. Protection then of the religious spirit, even an ardent effort to keep the seekers from the daily interference in their lives on one plea or other, would greatly help the very nature of the individuals. But its violation ultimately would threaten the solidarity of the society. The greatness of the State lies in its serving the diverse interests of the individuals. Religion is as profound and basic impulse and need for each individual at some period or other as any other.

Hindu Religion is a force that makes for culture and social cohesion based on love and not on brute might or social coercion. It is something that makes life livable. It is not an escapist phenomenon, but a profound influence or tendency which makes man strive to know what he is.

Helped by philosophical thought which it sets into action, it seeks clarity and fulness for all. But it is necessary to weed out its extra-religious activities, which could well be attended to by the State. Religion can influence the State only through the lives of its members, or the persons who constitute the Government, who imbued with religious principles would put into practice these principles through the social apparatus and organisation. The State by itself must remain secular, not taking sides with religions which have different loyalties. Herein comes a distinction, which it is necessary to draw, between religion and religions. Mankind is yearning for Religion but not for religions. Institutional religions serve religion but slightly. The goal is the religious spirit. No religion does this so well as Hinduism. It has institutions but not an institution which can speak for Hinduism. Hinduism lives in its members, in and through the practice and tradition of its saints and seekers. The grand catholicism of Hinduism is evidenced by the living interest in the cultivation of all *sādhănās* and *yogās* among its people. Śrī Vaiṣṇavism of Śrī Rāmānuja has absorbed the religious and mystic traditions of all the best so that the individuals may grow through the inner tradition of religion and mysticism. It too tried to leaven the life of the society by the eternal assurance of divine

presence among men, in the form of the *Arcāvatāra* of Śrī Veṅkateśvara. All great thinkers and saints have accepted this fact that the world must be made fit for the residence of God, and the Kingdom of God on earth. Reform of the earth life, and the social life of its individuals, if need be a revolution in the ways of social life, were envisaged by St. Śaṭhakopa in his divine Hymns, the *Tiruvāymoḷi*. The goal of religion is the transformation of man from the seeker of wealth and desire without restraint into a man who is the knower of law, liberty or true freedom, and secondly to make the society which is at present competitive and restrictive, into a divine society where all relationships would be based on love that is born out of the wisdom that all are children of the one Supreme Lord and that it is the real expression of one's nature.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION.

Hinduism is a universal religion because it affirms the existence of God as not only God beyond the world but as the inner Love in all *jīvas*. Every one can seek Him and see Him face to face. The great Ṛṣis, Āḷvārs and Nāyanmārs sought God and saw Him face to face. The existence of God is proved by the experience of God. *Śāstra* is not opposed to science as its method of knowing God is scientific and it can be verified by personal experience. God is *satya* and *amala*, true and pure. Therefore, only the pure in heart who follow the *sāttvik* way can reach Him. Since the end is pure, the means also must be pure. Hinduism, therefore, insists on purity of conduct in thought, word and deed as the essential requisites for religious life. It is more a personal religion aiming at inner purity of life than on institutional loyalty and uniformity of faith.

No two persons are alike in temperament or station in life. Hinduism provides for every kind of *adhikārin* or aspirant and he is allowed to choose the path that is suited to his spiritual growth. A man may worship God in whatever form; He reveals Himself to him in that form.

But he should seek Him with a pure heart. Though Hinduism thus aims at unity in variety, it still follows an ancient tradition bequeathed from father to son and from *guru* to *śiṣya* and insists on *satsaṅga*. The *āśrama* is a spiritual community of the *sādhūs* and as *satsaṅga* it provides an inspiring social ideal.

The atmosphere of the temple in the centre of civic life is a perpetual reminder to the Hindu that God is in the centre of all his activities and is the real actor. The family, the *vidyāśālā*, the temple and the state offer facilities for mutual understanding and service. The family is the unit of social life spiritualised on the model of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The temple affords every scope for the practice of the all-pervading presence of the Lord as Vāsudeva. Since rituals are only righteousness in details, they should be performed correctly in the interests of moral and spiritual discipline. Every righteous work is a worship of God; it is a dedication to Him in the spirit ' Not I, but Thou oh Lord ' or *Brahmārpaṇa*. There is really no barrier or compartment between one person and the other as all are persons are spiritual entities in whose hearts God dwells as *antaryāmin*. A community of good souls or *sātviks* promotes the religious ideal of communion between God and man. Hinduism is known for its tolerance. Differences of opinion and even

worship are tolerated. There is no compromise in the matter of conviction and purity of moral life. In addition to universality and tolerance, Hinduism is the only religion that recognises the immanence of Brahman in all *jīvas* as their *antaryāmin* and the redemptive purpose of the avatāras, the similarity of all *jīvas* and the need for *kaiṅkarya* and the salvability of all souls or *jīvas*. It promotes the spirit of propaganda and insists on religious education. But it is definitely opposed to the methods of coercion and proselytisation.

The spread of Hinduism by adapting it to modern needs without in any way giving up its essentials is its most urgent need today. This is achieved by the creation of proper teachers by affording them all facilities for the promotion of Hindu ideals. They should embody in their life all the ideals that they preach to others; religious education has no meaning if theory and practice do not coincide and if precept is not backed up by the purity of the personal conduct of the educators. The mutts in India may maintain their own tradition but they can pool their resources to fight irreligion and anti-Hindu influences from within and without. Tirumalai as the home of God and His eternal values offers the best social climate of physical and spiritual purity and may be the headquarters of this missionary effort.

APPENDIX
ILLUSTRATIVE STORIES.

CHAPTER I.

Matsyāvatāra
Yājñyavalkya
Bharadvāja
Tirukkaccinambi

CHAPTER II.

Naciketas
Satyakāma Jābāli
Gods in the *Kenopaniṣad*
Bhṛgu-Vāruṇi
Jānaśruti
Śvetaketu
Nārada
Yajñavalkya
Upakosala
Jaṭāyu
Sabarī
Bali

CHAPTER III.

Indra and Virocana

CHAPTER VII.

Rāma
Bhīṣma
Laksmaṇa
Bharata
Uattaṅka
Ekalavya
Kapota
Śibi
Hariścandra
Karṇa
Sāvitrī
Anasūyā
Rākṣasīs
Viśvāmitra
Agastya
Śarabhaṅga
Sītā
Kaikeyī
Rāvaṇa
Dilīpa
Rukmāṅgada
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CHAPTER VIII.

Veṅkaṭāchala Māhātmya

CHAPTER IX.

Prahlāda
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